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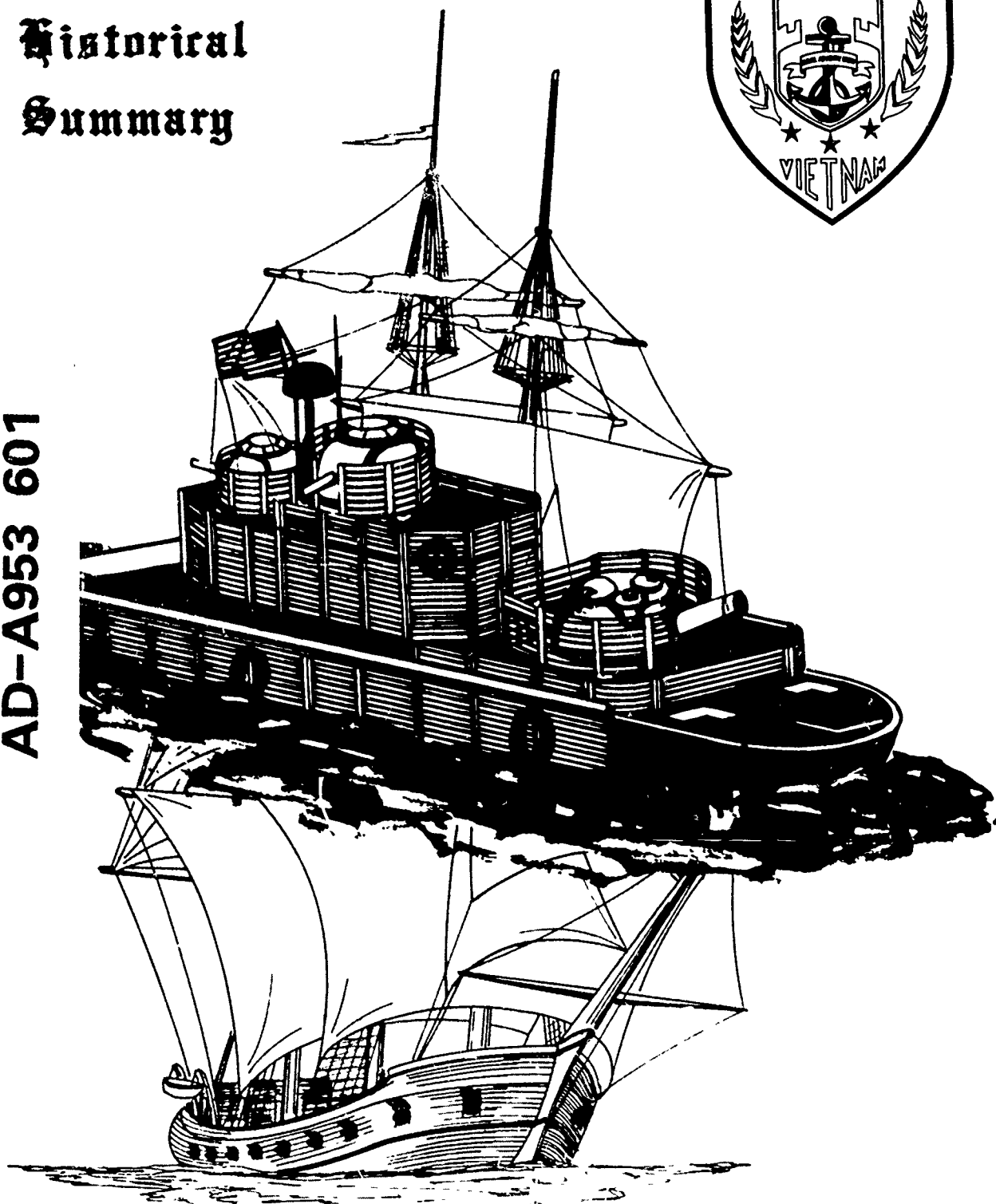
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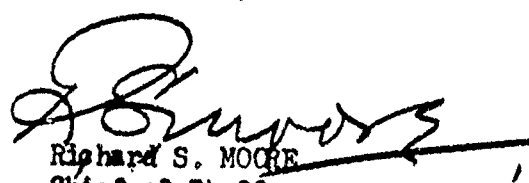
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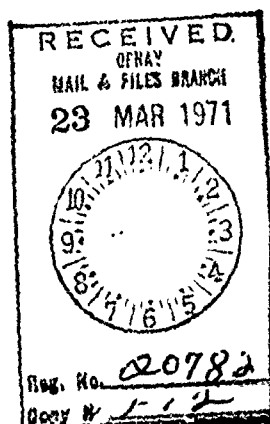
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CHINFO

CO NAVPHIBSCOL LCREEK

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PHIBTRADET MARIS

NSRDC PANFLA

NIOTC MARIS

Project Manager, Naval Inshore Warfare Project, Washington, D.C. 20360

CG Aerospace Studies Institute (Code ASAD), Maxwell AFB Ala. 36112

CHNAVSEC C&GS Col., Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas 66027

CHNAVSEC Air University (Attn: AUL (SE) 69-10), Maxwell AFB

USA SPECIAL WARFARE SCHOOL (Attn: USN/MC Liaison Officer)

Ft. Bragg, N.C. 28307

USMC Rep., U.S. Army Infantry School, Ft. Benning, Ga. 31905

DIA (DIAAP 4A2/ Pentagon)

Office of the Senior Marine Advisor, NAG, Box 9, FPO San Francisco 96626

Commander Naval Ship R&D Center, Wash., D.C. 20007

Commander Mine Squadron ELEVEN

Commander Naval Special Warfare Group, Atlantic, NAVPHIBBASE

LCREEK, Norfolk, Va. 23521

COMNAVSPECWARGRUV, NSAS, Box 24

COMNAVORDSYS COM (ORD-08)

NAVFORV/NAVADVGRP MACV NOTE C5216 of 1 Oct 1970

List II. A. (SNA)

List II. B. (SMA)

List III (Coastal Group Commands and Activities)

List IV. B. (MINEDIVs)

List IV. F. (Aircraft Squadrons)

List V. A1. (NSF DaNang)

List V. A2. (NSAD Nha Be)

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MONTHLY HISTORICAL SUMMARY

January 1971

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JO3 Robert S. Drew

Historical Journalist..... JO2 Don H. Stephenson

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Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
<u>FOREWORD</u>	ii
<u>CURRENT OPERATIONS</u>	1
<u>USN OPERATIONS</u>	
Operation <u>SOLID ANCHOR</u>	2
<u>VNN OPERATIONS</u>	
Task Fleet 21.....	12
Operation TRAN HUNG DAO I.....	13
Operation TRAN HUNG DAO II.....	15
Operation TRAN HUNG DAO V.....	21
Operation TRAN HUNG DAO VI.....	22
Operation TRAN HUNG DAO VIII.	26
Operation TRAN HUNG DAO IX.....	30
Operation TRAN HUNG DAO X.....	31
Operation TRAN HUNG DAO XIV.....	35
Operation TRAN HUNG DAO XVII.....	39
Operation TRAN HUNG DAO XVIII.....	47
Rung Sat Special Zone.....	51
Long Tau Shipping Channel.....	56
<u>CTF 211</u>	57
<u>CTF 214</u>	58
<u>RIVER ASSAULT GROUPS</u>	59
<u>SPECIAL WARFARE</u>	60
<u>COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCES</u>	62
<u>PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS AND CIVIC ACTION</u>	73
<u>ACCELERATED TURNOVER PROGRAM AND TRAINING</u>	77
<u>NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY, SAIGON</u>	79
<u>THIRTY-SECOND NAVAL CONSTRUCTION REGIMENT</u>	83
<u>Appendix I - Glossary of Abbreviations</u>	I-1

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FOREWORD

The notorious TET Season came and went in South Vietnam amid a flurry of ominous prognostications of heightened enemy activity, but neither the harlequin streets of Saigon nor the concertina-fringed bases in the countryside provided the scene for the TET Offensive of 1971. The more sage observers of the Vietnam War have long since abandoned any attempt to predict when the enemy will act, but there is some foundation for the suggestion that if he had planned to increase his activity in January, he may have been subsequently diverted by continued allied pressure in Cambodia. Miscellaneous intelligence reports indicated that large-unit movement across the border continued during the month, and one informant reported that the local VC in Khanh Hoa Province had been ordered to concentrate on political warfare as Main Force units were needed in Cambodia: whether this shift in tactics represented a general trend throughout the southern regions of the country remains to be seen.

The relative quiet to the north, however, was sonorously counterpointed by the eruptions of mines, mortars, and machine guns deep within the U Minh Forest, where members from all branches of the South Vietnamese armed forces and their American advisors continued to meet strenuous resistance. The most pernicious problems for the Naval assets engaged in TRAN HUNG DAO XVII were the mines, which

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claimed all the six heavy craft sunk during the month; two USN RAID advisors lost their lives in one of the mining incidents.

Another new TRAN HUNG DAO operation was initiated on 12 January at Tan Chau under the OPCON of RADM H.S. Matthews, Deputy COMNAVFORV. TRAN HUNG DAO XVIII was devised in response to numerous sinkings of merchant ships carrying fuel and ammunition between the Cambodian border and Phnom Penh. A severe POL shortage in the Cambodian capital, caused in part by enemy blockage of Route 4 between Phnom Penh and the port of Kompong Som, made resupply via the Mekong all the more crucial. The TRAN HUNG DAO XVIII Operation was therefore a convoy escort operation consisting of Vietnamese Naval assets and employing both ARVN and Cambodian ground troops for bank security. Five convoys were successfully sent from Tan Chau to Phnom Penh during January.

As of 28 January, 16,495 USN personnel remained in South Vietnam.

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CURRENT OPERATIONS

<u>VNN Designation</u>	<u>USN Designation</u>
TRAN HUNG DAO I (TG 212.4)	NONE
TRAN HUNG DAO II (TG 214.1)	GIANT SLINGSHOT
TRAN HUNG DAO IV	SOLID ANCHOR (TG 116.1)
TRAN HUNG DAO V (TG 216.1)	READY DECK
TRAN HUNG DAO VI (TG 212.5)	SEARCH TURN
TRAN HUNG DAO VII (TG 221.1)	SEA TIGER
TRAN HUNG DAO VIII (TG 217.1)	NONE
TRAN HUNG DAO IX (TG 212.3)	BARRIER REEF
TRAN HUNG DAO X (TG 212.6)	BREEZY COVE
TRAN HUNG DAO XIV (TG 217.2)	NONE
TRAN HUNG DAO XV (TF 213)	MARKET TIME Inner Barrier
TRAN HUNG DAO XVII (TF 210)	NONE
TRAN HUNG DAO XVIII (TF 218)	NONE
RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE	NONE

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Operation SOLID ANCHOR

The inception of the new year failed to generate any relief for the combined United States and Vietnamese forces of Operation SOLID ANCHOR. The last American-controlled naval operation, functioning in one of the most hostile areas of South Vietnam, continued to suffer from supply and repair difficulties and incessant Communist harassment. During the month, a brazen enemy bombarded the Nam Can Advanced Tactical Support Base four times, killed three of the allies and wounded 40. CTG 116.1 reported that his forces killed 18 Communist soldiers and captured 33.

The SOLID ANCHOR commander was again plagued with vast incapacitating material difficulties during January. Of the ten PCFs assigned to the Nam Can AO, generally only one was totally operational, while four on the average were completely inoperative. The remaining "Swift" boats experienced systems malfunctions which limited their capabilities in various degrees. The assault craft of RIDs 41 and 44 presented an equally dismal record with an average of only 44% availability. COMNAVSUPPACT Saigon, in attempting to explain this unsatisfactory level, pointed to the lack of preventive maintenance by VNN boat crews, incomplete and untimely submission of work requests, and the physical limitations of the Nam Can repair ammi.

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The abrupt cancellation of regularly scheduled VNN resupply runs to the isolated Nam Can ATSB in early January forced CTG 116.1 to adopt ad hoc measures. As the operation's artillery ammunition, and POL supplies reached dangerously low levels, the USS PARK COUNTY (LST 1077) was selected to make the risky but uneventful voyage up the Song Bo De on the 10th of the month. By the end of January, vital stores remained depleted, and COMNAVSUPPACT Saigon was employing air lifts to SOLID ANCHOR as a stop gap relief measure.

CTG 116.1 made an effort during the month to replace the "Swift" boat fleet at SOLID ANCHOR with a like number of PBRs. He argued that the smaller, swifter PBRs would be more suited to the tactical situation and might maneuver more easily in the shallow, serpentine canals of his AO. The PCFs, in addition to presenting vast maintenance difficulties, are limited in use to the major rivers, the Song Cua Lon and Song Bo De. COMNAVFORV denied this request, however, insisting that the PBR pump systems often failed when operating in shallow, muddy water, such as that of the SOLID ANCHOR AO. Moreover, this switch would require a complete revamping of the Nam Can repair facility which was equipped to accommodate only ailing PCFs.

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The small, isolated Nam Can base endured no less than four mortar barrages at the hands of the increasingly bold enemy in January. The first two attacks, occurring on the evenings of 9 and 23 January, were relatively mild, averaging ten rounds apiece and inflicting only a few very slight fragmentation casualties. Biet Hai troops swept the area after both attacks and discovered two fresh mortar pits approximately 2,000 meters northeast of the base.

The Viet Cong celebrated the arrival of TET by launching a much more intensive attack on the night of 25 January when they lobbed 75 to 100 82 mm mortar rounds into the SOLID ANCHOR base camp. The rounds impacted throughout the ATSB but were concentrated near the waterfront. Two American and six Vietnamese sailors were wounded, and an ASPB and ATC were badly damaged. Several rounds landed in the ARVN compound across the Cua Lon River and wounded five soldiers. Riverine crews attempted to get all their boats underway as Seawolf helicopters, OV-10 aircraft, and SOLID ANCHOR howitzers returned fire at the suspected enemy position.

The TET holidays concluded with a brief mortar barrage in the early morning hours of 31 January. While the SOLID ANCHOR base remained unscathed, six ARVN soldiers were wounded by rounds which fell short on the river's south bank. A local intelligence source suggested that these attacks were manifestations of an avowed Communist

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intention to destroy the allies' Nam Can base. By month's end, CTG 116.1 was maintaining a peak defensive posture to cope with such an eventuality.

Allied river boats were ambushed seven times during January but managed to escape serious damage as the enemy continued to employ quick hit and run tactics. An American advisor attached to RID 44 was slightly wounded on 9 January when his boat was hit by B-40 rocket fire as it beached for a DUFFLEBAG sensor implant mission six kilometers south of SOLID ANCHOR (WQ 015 634). In one of the more effective enemy efforts, Communist guerrillas attacked boats of RIDs 41 and 44 on 18 January with B-40 rockets and automatic weapons fire. The incident occurred at WQ 270 740, 30 kilometers east of the Nam Can base, while the boats were enroute to support an operation in the Dam Doi Zone. Three American Navymen, two U.S. Marine advisors, and nine Vietnamese were wounded and their ATC damaged. Another RID 41 boat was ambushed the following day in the Dam Doi Zone (WQ 305 765) as it was operating in support of Vietnamese Marines along the bank. In suppressing the VC automatic weapons fire, the crew killed two guerrillas and in the ensuing ground sweep, captured a third. The prisoner, a 15-year-old VC rocket squad leader, stated that he was part of a predominately NVA company which was conducting ambush operations in the Dam Doi Zone. His unit, recently arrived from a rest and training camp near Ca Mau, carried six long range 82 mm mortars.

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The SOLID ANCHOR LSSL 330 was hit with rocket and small arms fire on the 25th of the month 25 kilometers east of the ATSB (WQ 241 680). The escorting PCFs and Biet Hai forces suppressed the enemy fire, but not before the USN advisor and one Vietnamese crew member sustained slight fragmentation wounds.

U.S. Navy Seals of Detachment Golf, Whiskey and Zulu Platoons, experienced the most harrowing month to date of their in-country tours. Extending into the heart of guerrilla strongholds, the Navy commandos gravely weakened Viet Cong attack capabilities by capturing a vast amount of weapons and supplies in January. Their surreptitious raids were not entirely one-sided, however, for while they reported killing 14 and capturing 21 of the enemy, the Seals themselves suffered extensive casualties of one killed and ten wounded.

During the first two weeks of the month, the Seals avoided heavy enemy contact and concentrated on interdicting Viet Cong supply routes and training the newly arrived LDNN unit. On one occasion, a small squad deprived the guerrillas of their monthly rations by capturing 3,000 pounds of rice and shrimp, while on another, Seals seized an arms cache of over 400 grenades. On the morning of 12 January members of Whiskey Platoon, involved in blowing up log and mud barricades in a canal 12 kilometers northeast of Nam Can (WQ 05 02), killed two VC who were approaching their position.

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LT Couch's Whiskey Platoon Seals combined with a UDT squad, a PF platoon and Seawolf helicopters to deal the enemy a decisive blow on 17 January. PF and local informer intelligence revealed the location of a large Ho Chi Minh memorial and Viet Cong hospital and storage complex in the jungle 25 kilometers southwest of SOLID ANCHOR (VQ 807 504). The Seals and PF team inserted at a point five kilometers from the objective at 0515H and for the next hour, patrolled southward by sampan through a network of canals. Along the way they encountered Viet Cong sentries at various checkpoints, but the PF guide gave the correct response to their challenges, and the Seals succeeded in capturing three of them. The undetected group arrived at the VC stronghold at 0615H, whereupon they captured three more guards. At this point an enemy soldier in a nearby hootch spotted the invaders and fired at them briefly, alerting his cohorts. Their position revealed, the allies called in a Light Helo Fire Team to suppress fire while they set about destroying the supply site. Utilizing all available personnel, the commando group rounded up nine VCI and 35 Communist sympathizers and abandoned the supply area to permit the gunships to rake it with fire. Later in the morning the UDT team blew up the Ho Chi Minh memorial tower adjacent to the supply site, and the combined force withdrew under air cover. At 1205H a small Seal/PF squad reinserted at the mouth of the Rach Cai Hoang

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(WQ 807 559), entered a suspected VC hamlet, and captured five VC and 30 suspected sympathizers. The Seals loaded all their detainees into eleven sampans, and the LSSC, with one engine operative, began towing the reluctant caravan from the area. By 1800H the PF squad had commandeered three Vietnamese fishing junks to assist in towing the captured fleet back to the PF outpost.

The results of this day-long operation were impressive. The combined forces, while not sustaining a single casualty, had destroyed 100 pounds of pharmaceutical supplies, a VC infirmary and pharmacy, three tons of rice and shrimp meal, 500 pounds of general store goods, 100 gallons of gasoline, 15 sampans, an indoctrination center, three supply hootches, and ten defensive bunkers. The additional captured material, including 150 pounds of medical supplies, 50 pounds of documents, 200 pounds of sundry stores, four junks, and 14 sampans, was turned over to the PF commander along with the 20 captured Viet Cong. The remainder of the evacuees were absorbed in the Go Cong Resettlement Area.

The small Seal detachment advising the new LDNN team at SOLID ANCHOR was not so fortunate during January. As a 12 man Seal/LDNN unit was extracting from a simple interdiction patrol five kilometers southeast of SOLID ANCHOR (WQ 045 665) on 19 January, its LSSC was directly hit with two B-40 rockets and small arms fire.

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The explosions threw several people overboard, ruptured the starboard fuel bladder, damaged the controls and radio, and incapacitated the coxswain. One USN advisor, LT James F. Thames, was killed along with two LDNNs. The second American advisor and another LDNN were wounded. A fifth LDNN was lost and never recovered. As the crew attempted to bring the craft under control and extinguish a gasoline fire, the Viet Cong detonated several claymore mines with negligible results. The uninjured LDNNs returned fire and caused their assailants to flee their ambush site.

A quick reaction force of Zulu Platoon Seals boarded SEA LORDS and Seawolf helicopters at SOLID ANCHOR to attempt rescue of the remnants of the disabled squad. The rescue party had effected the difficult insertion into the narrow canal by 1410H after several Seals, braving enemy automatic weapons fire, dove out of their helicopter from a height of 30 feet. As the small reaction force drove the enemy back from the canal banks and Seawolves provided air cover, the SEA LORDS helicopter swooped down to medevac the wounded. The reaction force then swept the contact area and recovered eight launch bombs, ten launchers, and assorted grenades and mortar rounds abandoned by the enemy. After all allied personnel were extracted, Seawolves and ARVN artillery saturated the entire area with rockets and shells for the next two hours but were unable to confirm any enemy casualties.

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Five more of the Navy's counter-guerrilla specialists were wounded at month's end while attempting to insert on a mission to destroy a VC hootch complex. On the afternoon of 30 January, the SEA LORDS helicopter carrying a seven man Zulu Platoon squad was hit by ground fire, and one Seal was wounded. After the injured man was returned to the base, the remaining Seals inserted near their objective, 11 kilometers east of SOLID ANCHOR (WQ 144 775). Two of the commandos were wounded immediately, and when the squad tried to extract after a brief but intense skirmish in which five VC were killed, two more Seals were wounded. This exchange was particularly poignant for the wounded Americans; their platoon was scheduled to cease operations the following day in preparation for return to the United States.

The SOLID ANCHOR Biet Hai unit assisted in thwarting the enemy's strike capability during January by seizing several small ammunition caches, patrolling the banks of the Cua Long and Bo De Rivers, and conducting nightly ambushes outside the base perimeter.

On 23 January the 7th Vietnamese Marine Infantry Battalion and Battery 'B' departed SOLID ANCHOR for Saigon and were replaced by the 1st Battalion of the 32nd ARVN Regiment. Three days later this unit departed after being relieved by the 44th ARVN Ranger Battalion.

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Command of Operation SOLID ANCHOR changed hands on 23 January when Captain Robert E. Spruit, USN, relieved Colonel Francis W. Tief, USMC. Captain Spruit, the Senior Advisor to CTF 212 and Commander of Delta Naval Forces, assumed the job as additional duty, and Colonel Tief, who had only been at Nam Can since 9 December, returned to Saigon as Senior Marine Advisor.

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TASK FLEET 21

The initiation of Operation TRAN HUNG DAO XVIII, the Upper Mekong River convoy operation, was the primary Task Fleet 21 innovation during January. As ARVN forces intensified their offensive against major Communist strongholds within the Khmer Republic, enemy pressure on allied naval forces in South Vietnam's Military Region III and northern Military Region IV continued to abate. Allied units of Operation SOLID ANCHOR, the last American-controlled naval operation, and Operation TRAN HUNG DAO XVII in the U Minh Forest, enjoyed no New Year's reprieve, however, as hostile activity continued at a high pace in these Ca Mau Peninsula AOs.

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TRAN HUNG DAO I

As in the TRAN HUNG DAO IX operation to the east, enemy infiltration efforts through the TRAN HUNG DAO I AO were again muted during January. In 19 fire fights the allies sustained one killed and two wounded while killing seven of the enemy.

One possible reason for the low level of hostile activity was the temporary disestablishment of the Cambodian border patrol along the Vinh Te Canal when the only available repair ship, the USS SATYR (ARL 23) left the area on 6 January. Patrolling was resumed on 14 January when YR-71 relocated at Tan Chau and assumed responsibility for boat maintenance.

Another possible explanation of inactivity stemmed from what the Senior Advisor of River Patrol Division 55 called the "marginal effectiveness" of his crews. In a message to CTF 212, the advisor commented that "in spite of assignments, boats frequently go to positions of their own choice, remain in the villages, moor in two or three boat sections, cook after dark, and play commercial radios. The single [man on] watch is frequently found asleep by the advisor, and WBGP's are never varied and often set in view and hearing of fishermen" ¹. The advisor concluded, however, that while his protégés' attitudes were poor, their ability was good and the situation

1. SA RPD FIVE FIVE Msg, DTG 110830Z February 71.

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was improving.

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TRAN HUNG DAO II

The few engagements between TRAN HUNG DAO II forces and the enemy during January tended to confirm the supposition that the latter is more interested in political warfare and in reestablishing commo-liaison routes than in ambushing river patrols. While there were but five friendly and four enemy - initiated fire fights throughout the month, there were numerous indications that the enemy had not lost his tenacity in the area. That he was still determined to cut LOCs and thereby reduce GVN access to some of the more remote villages was evidenced on 22 January at 0130H as the Ben Soi Bridge was shaken by a mine explosion that destroyed two of its sections. Repairs were quickly accomplished, and traffic soon resumed. A large arms cache (216 B-40 rockets, 65 B-41s, and 500 boosters) was found by a Rural Development Cadre on 6 January five miles east of the Vam Co Dong on the Tay Ninh-Hau Nghia (XT 42 17). The NiLO at Tra Cu speculated that the cache may signal the renewed use of the An Ninh Corridor as a commo-liaison route. An anti-personnel radar has accordingly been positioned at XT 42 16 and, having communications with both Go Dau Ha and Tra Cu NOCs, should provide for a quick response to sightings in the area.

Activity on the rivers themselves was about average, with one or two unusual developments. During a daylight transit on 26 January, RPD 64 boats came across two VC flags in trees along a stretch of

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river four kilometers from Moc Hoa (XS 064 890). There were also leaflets exhorting American soldiers to lay down their arms and return immediately to apprehensive wives and mothers across the sea. This was the first sign of VC activity on that part of the river in at least five months.

One of the rare mining incidents in the TRAN HUNG DAO II AO happened at 1228H, 15 January, when the civilian tug, MOBY DICK, en-route to Tan An with barge in tow, detonated a submerged explosive four miles from Tuyen Nhon without incurring major damage. The PBR escorts were unable to follow up on the contact.

Numerous radar contacts the night of 1 January prompted two PBRs of RPD 64 to set a WBGp at 2052H 5.5 kilometers north-northwest of Tuyen Nhon (XS 253 821). At 2152H the radar unit reported from three to five people approaching the boats on the north bank. The PBRs commenced firing runs, and the radar unit held eight men running north, at which time the boats dropped five 60mm mortar rounds into the vicinity. Three of the VC were estimated killed. At 2300H the same night, crewmembers of two ATCs from RID 48 sighted and sank two sampans two miles northwest of Ben Luc (XS 590 788). The number of occupants remained undetermined.

VNN sailors of two RPD54 boats sighted a sampan emerging from

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a canal at 2110H, 5 January, 13 miles northwest of Tan An (XS 420 765), opened fire, and sank the sampan. One VC was confirmed dead, two more considered probably dead, and one wounded. Various documents were also captured.

The pre-positioned claymore mine was again employed by the enemy at 1900H, 13 January, when two RPD 53 boats enroute to their WBGP position four miles west of Ben Keo (XT 161 423) received a B-40 round which missed, then the claymore, which hit the cover boat and wounded two VNN sailors.

Two RID 47 ATCs accounted for another dead VC at 2215H, 21 January, when in a WBGP three miles north of Go Dau Ha (XT 335 295), they observed three VC approach their position and opened fire. One of the enemy was ascertained dead and the other two presumed so.

Two VC suspects were detained at 2000H, 11 January. The crews of two RPD 53 boats were in a WBGP four kilometers from Ben Keo (XT 185 415) when they spied and detained two female occupants, both of whom they turned over to Tay Ninh Sector for questioning. Attacks on bases and adjacent villages were rare, although Moc Hoa and Tan An personnel experienced some activity. At 2355H on 7 January, what was apparently a B-40 rocket was fired at ATSB Moc Hoa from the opposite bank; return fire was initiated with unknown results. The

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village of Moc Hoa also received two mortar rounds the night of 21 January. At the PBR MOBASE II, located near Tan An (XS 570 650), a swimmer - sapper was sighted at 2143H, 22 January, 80 feet off the barge. A subsequent EOD inspection of chains and hull revealed no explosive devices.

The Seawolves undoubtedly accounted for the majority of the reported kills for the month, although most of these were unconfirmed kills. One incident in which corroboration was possible occurred eight miles east of My An (XS 066 657) at 2023H, 14 January, when Seawolves 42 and 45 were called on to support a surrounded Regional Forces Company. Four VC bodies were found the next day.

Harbor Clearance Unit One representatives successfully salvaged two fuel ammis sunk last month at TRAN HUNG DAO II bases. A small 11,000 gallon ammi was raised on about 12 January at Ben Keo and towed to Ben Luc. A larger 70,000 gallon ammi was refloated on 26 January and also taken to Ben Luc.

Some internal changes occurred for Task Group 214.1 during the month. Commander Huynh Kim Gia, VNN, relieved Lieutenant Commander Pham Van Tieu, VNN, as CTG 214.1 on 15 January. RPD 53 also received a new commanding officer as Lieutenant Phan Thanh Thuan took over from Lieutenant Nguyen Van Thuan on 18 January at Ben Keo.

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A slight rearrangement of assets took place on 12 January as RID 48 departed Ben Luc for MOBASE II at Tan An and was replaced by ten PBRs from RPD 54.

January thus did not produce an appreciable increase in river or ground activity as might have been expected from the TET season. There were continued reports that more NVA main force units were moving into the AO, and the NILO at Tay Ninh reported on 8 January that captured documents stated that two regiments of the NVA Seventh Division had moved into his province. The Third Riverine Area Intelligence Officer remained skeptical of reports of an overall large influx, however, though he did not discount the possibility that more main force units may appear in an attempt to divert ARVN troops from further Cambodian incursions, especially as more U.S. troops are withdrawn.

So far as the success of the VNN interdiction effort was concerned, traffic on the waterways was consistently light, although there were some signs that old com-mo-liaison routes were still being used and that new ones were being attempted. Local informants reported that from six to 12 undetected river crossings took place the week of 15 January just north of Ben Luc between the Luong Hoa and Thu Thua Canals. This segment of the Vam Co Dong is bordered on either side

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by pineapple fields which provide good cover and which are regarded as a very likely haven for local VC. It was considered probable that the crossings took place because Ben Luc was without assets at the time.

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TRAN HUNG DAO V

TRANHUNG DAO V river boats of River Division 52 and River Assault Group 24 failed to inflict a single enemy casualty during the month of January. CTG 216.1 reported that his men engaged in only three fire fights, all initiated by the enemy, in the Upper Saigon River AO. The only friendly casualties in January resulted from mistaken identity and carelessness. On the afternoon of 19 January, three RAG 24 boats were proceeding north 19 kilometers northwest of Phu Cuong (XT 679 228) when crewmembers saw three men on the east bank and opened fire. Firing terminated when the 38th ARVN Regiment Headquarters radioed that the men were ARVN troops. The wounded men were medevaced within an hour.

Four VNN sailors were wounded by their own grenade on 25 January in the village of Dau Tieng. The crewmen of three RPD 52 PBRs interrupted their daylight patrol to go into the village for some refreshment. While sitting in a local establishment, one sailor produced a fragmentation grenade, pulled the pin, and dropped it into a glass. The ensuing explosion wounded four sailors and a small child sitting nearby.

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TRAN HUNG DAO VI

In the two months after the Vietnamese Navy assumed control of Operation TRAN HUNG DAO VI, hostile activity in the Kien Giang Province AO continued to decline. While the VNN commander, CTG 212.5, reported that his river patrol boats participated in 23 fire fights during January, the allies did not suffer a single fatality. Two Vietnamese and one American sailor were wounded in the month's fighting, while the enemy suffered 11 killed.

The Kien Giang Province Viet Cong intensified their campaign of random terror against the local population during January. On 18 January guerrillas fired 18 81mm mortar rounds into the heart of Rach Gia City. Five days later, a hamlet six kilometers south of Rach Gia (WS 129 003) received three 107mm rockets which killed five civilians and wounded ten. PBRs from RPD 61 picked up the wounded citizens and took them to the Rach Soi ISB for treatment, and OV-10 aircraft from Binh Thuy arrived to place air strikes on the suspected enemy launch site. Four more civilian inhabitants of Rach Gia City were wounded on 25 January by still another mortar attack.

While the ISB Rach Soi was never directly threatened during the month, CTG 212.5 continued his efforts to strengthen base defense to cope with any eventuality. Base personnel gave particular emphasis

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to increasing bunkering and sand bag protection of living and medical facilities.

Three River Patrol Division 58 PBRs engaged in a brief but vicious fire fight in a canal 29 kilometers northwest of Rach Gia (VS 863 240) on the night of 6 January. The PBRs had established a WBGp in the Luynh Quynh Canal in support of a Ninth ARVN Division drive into the Three Sisters area when crewmen saw a group of sampans shuttling personnel across the waterway to the south of them. The allies opened fire and called in Seawolves and OV-10 aircraft. While both the PBRs and the aircraft received heavy return fire, they did not sustain any casualties. There were five secondary explosions around the enemy positions, and soldiers who swept the area reported finding numerous blood trails, suggesting the probable deaths of five Viet Cong.

One PBR of RPD 58 was seriously damaged by B-40 rocket fire on the morning of 9 January, three kilometers south of Rach Soi (WS 135 055). As four PBRs were returning to TRAN HUNG DAO VI headquarters after an all night WBGp, Viet Cong attacked the last boat in the column with B-40 rockets and AK-47 fire. One rocket hit PBR 7648 at the starboard waterline, two feet aft of the bow, ripping an 18 inch hole in the hull. The boat captain was able to

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beach his sinking craft as the crews of the other boats fired back at the enemy position. PBR 7648 continued to receive automatic weapons fire for several minutes until Seawolves and the other boat crews suppressed all enemy activity. The patrol officer established a defensive perimeter around the disabled boat, and within four hours, a salvage team had towed the PBR to ISB Rach Soi.

On the night of 29 January, crewmen of two PBRs of RPD 58 saw enemy movement approaching their WBGp position (WR 200 865) from a distance of 100 meters and took the area under fire. The boats then received return fire, including four hand grenades, from a second enemy position only 50 meters away. Apparently the first observed enemy movement was a ruse to distract the crew's attention from the second VC group attempting to creep within grenade range of the PBRs. The allied boat gunners, joined eventually by OV-10 planes, continued firing and claimed to have probably killed six Viet Cong. Two Vietnamese crewmen were slightly wounded.

Seals of Detachment Golf, Romeo Platoon travelled 35 kilometers southwest of Rach Soi on 14 January to attempt interdiction of VC infiltration along the Kien An District coastline. As the group slowly worked its way north checking sampans along the way, it captured two Viet Cong and their weapons at VR 845 723. Shortly thereafter, the Seals saw

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a man jump from another sampan 100 meters away and begin to swim ashore. One Seal disembarked into the sampan of the two captured VC as the rest of the unit went to pursue. At this point, one of the captured Viet Cong broke loose from his bonds and tried to grab his guard's weapon. The Seal was forced to shoot him. The other Seals were unable to capture the swimmer but believed that they wounded him.

Romeo Platoon Seals were only partially successful in attempting to destroy a Viet Cong district office and weapons repair facility later in the month. On 24 January, the commandos inserted at WR 129 800, nine kilometers south of Kien An, after helicopter gunships had strafed the area. Half of the group patrolled eastward, searching hootches and destroying VC ordnance. While the Americans killed two VC who attempted to evade, one Seal, QMC D. L. Cunningham, was wounded from a small secondary explosion. The remaining Seals drove a small band of VC from a hootch but were unable to pursue them because of a network of booby traps along their escape route. As the Seals extracted by air, helicopter gunships placed air strikes on the enemy positions and received light but ineffective return fire.

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TRAN HUNG DAO VIII

The anticipated attack and the projected spring offensive which was to begin on TET, the onset of the lunar New Year, failed to materialize, and action during the month of January was light. The most active allied unit was LT Davis's Seal Detachment Alfa, 8th Platoon, which attempted to interdict the enemy's logistic sources and lines of communication. Two major fire fights and a PBR's collision on the river with a police boat were the most significant actions in the TRAN HUNG DAO VIII AO.

On 21 January at 0745H, a RAG 21/33 Monitor boat, escorted by an FOM, was taken under fire by B-40 rocket and AK-47 fire while transiting the Tong Doc Loc Canal (XS 245 590) enroute to My Phuoc Tay. The Monitor received three B-40 rockets, and the FOM received two B-40 rockets. Both boats returned fire, but in the encounter, one VN sailor and the Monitor's U.S. advisor, GMG1 Samuel H. Barnett, were blown overboard into the canal. The VN sailor survived, but the advisor, wounded in the legs, disappeared in the water and was reported missing. After suppressing the enemy fire, the FOM, which was carrying RF troops, beached and put ashore the troops for a sweep of the banks of the canal. The Vietnamese NOC at the RAG 21/33 base requested Seawolf support and received it immediately. On arrival, no targets were available,

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and the Seawolves set down to medevac the wounded VN. A dustoff also arrived to medevac the remaining Vietnamese casualties to My Tho. An MSSC boat with an EOD team embarked arrived on the scene and futilely searched for the missing advisor. On 22 January at 1900H, RF troops found the body of GMCl Barnett floating in the canal near the point of the past operation at XS 240 590. The results of the encounter were one VNN sailor, one RF soldier, and one USN killed, and eight VNN sailors and four RF troops wounded. Although the enemy was successful with five rocket hits, damage to the FOM and Monitor was mostly confined to the superstructure, and both were towed to Dong Tam for repairs.

RADM Matthews, Commander TRAN HUNG DAO, noting the intense struggle, stated: "While the loss of one ARVN, one VNN, and one USN is regretted, it is noted that due to your (217.1 units) rapid reaction, the enemy suffered a greater loss than we know about. Continue to emphasize readiness for attack when in operating areas, keeping in mind, he will ambush where we least expect it. Keep Charging."¹

1. CMD THD msg of 221000Z

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On 23 January at 1320H, RPD 53 boats with a RAG 21/33 FOM and escorts were transiting the Kinh Xang Canal (XS 344 562 to XS 347 561) in Dinh Tuong Province, 14 kilometers northwest of Dong Tam when the PBRs were fired upon from the southwest bank with B-40 rockets and small arms fire. One PBR immediately beached due to extensive damage, burned and finally sank. Seawolves and Cobra helicopters were immediately requested and made several strikes in the area. Another PBR ran aground but was pulled off as soon as the enemy fire was suppressed by a RAG boat. Three Americans, two believed serious, and two Vietnamese were wounded. Enemy casualties were unknown. This was the first transit of this area by boats of RPD 53, the division which had just relieved RPD 54 as CTU 217.1.2. The PBRs were returning to Dong Tam after an initial familiarization patrol when the attack occurred.

On 27 January at 0035H, in a bizarre incident that caused the death of a VNN PBR captain, a PBR from RPD 53 collided with a police boat on the My Tho River (XS 496 460) in Dinh Tuong Province. The accident was caused as a result of the PBR ramming the police boat which was anchored in the middle of the river without any lights showing. After the collision, the police boat moved downstream to the east and anchored again without rendering

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assistance to the two VNN who had fallen overboard, one of whom drowned. A second police boat arrived later along with RPD 53 boats and an Army helo to assist in the search. At 0830H, the search was concluded when the body of PBR boat captain Tran Phuc Hoa was found in the vicinity of XS 496 440.

The organization of TRAN HUNG DAO VIII assets and personnel at the start of the New Year was as follows:

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Advisor</u>
CTU 217.1.1	RAG 21/33	LT R. L. Lassiter
CTU 217.1.2	RPD 53	LT S. A. Wood
CTU 217.1.5	RID 45	LT F. Mauney
CTU 116.7.7	HAL 3 Det 7	LCDR Gordon

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TRAN HUNG DAO IX

Overt enemy activity in the Tran Hung Dao IX AO was virtually non-existent during January. Allied pressure on main body Communist forces in Cambodia vastly diminished the threat of cross-border infiltration, and TG 212, 3 PBRs and PCFs did not engage the enemy in a single fire fight during the month. Most activity shifted to the western sector of the AO where YRBM 20 at Tan Chau became the command post for the newly established allied convoy operation into Cambodia. Additionally, a VNN Mining Interdiction Division 93 detachment was established at An Long.

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TRAN HUNG DAO X

The new Vietnamese commander of Operation TRAN HUNG DAO X (CTG 212.6) enjoyed a relatively quiet month in what had recently been a highly hostile AO. While the Ca Mau headquarters was attacked once and Vietnamese river boats participated in ten fire fights, only three allies were wounded in January, and none were killed. Enemy losses inflicted by TG 212.6 units were reported as eight killed.

As intelligence reports of impending enemy attacks on the still incomplected Ca Mau LSB and the temporary headquarters at the adjacent PRU base continued to pour in, the American base commander (CTG 212.2) cancelled all other building projects in early January in order to devote total manpower resources to base defense construction. Moreover, nightly ambushes were set by all available forces, including two PF platoons to the south of the base, PRUs to the north, and PSDF troops in the hamlets to the east and west.

Despite these extensive precautions, an enemy unit staged a brief attack on the PRU base just before midnight on 15 January. After firing a brief barrage of automatic weapons fire from northwest and south of the base, the guerrillas lobbed a launch bomb into the moat on the north side of the base. As the base defenders temporarily suppressed the enemy fire, Seawolves arrived overhead, and after exchanging fire with the concealed insurgents, drove them away. The only

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casualty reported was a PSDF soldier wounded by a fragmentation grenade which was hurled at him by a fleeing Viet Cong west of the base.

In the ensuing ground sweep, two launch bombs, three launch tubes, and assorted firing mechanisms were captured. A local informant reported that 10-15 VC carrying five bodies had fled the environs of the ASTB following the attack.

CTG 116.2 reported that a quick reaction to DUFFLEBAG sensor activation possibly thwarted another enemy attack on 26 January. A local intelligence source indicated that the ATSB's accurate mortar fire killed or wounded half of a 12 man local VC unit which had moved into an attack position.

Navy Seals of LT Moran's Detachment Alfa, 9th Platoon methodically killed or captured various unsuspecting members of the An Xuyen VC infrastructure during January. A squad captured a village VC finance accountant and killed a "liberation" committeeman on 4 January in a hamlet 12 kilometers northeast of Hai Yen (VQ 908 928). On 7 January Kit Carson Scouts led a seven man squad to a point 34 kilometers south of Ca Mau to capture two Viet Cong, one the wife of a district level communist who had managed to escape his hootch moments before the green-faced commandos entered it.

Acting on ARVN intelligence, a Seal squad, a Kit Carson Scout,

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and a guide inserted by sampan at a point 14 kilometers southeast of Hai Yen (VQ 908 705) at dawn on 22 January. After trudging through 1200 meters of mud, the Seals entered a Viet Cong hootch but found it empty. Two VC with weapons then escaped an adjacent hootch as the squad approached, but the Seals finally managed to kill one guerrilla and wound another when a second pair tried to flee. As the Seals evacuated the hamlet along with six refugee families, they came under small arms fire but escaped unharmed under the cover of Seawolf air power.

The enemy sustained the greatest single loss of the month in the Song Ong Doc AO at the hands of two gunfire support ships steaming offshore in the Gulf of Thailand. The shore based allied spotter reported that fire from HMAS PERTH (D-38) and USCGC RUSH (WHEC 723) killed 64 and wounded another 16 members of an NVA Battalion which was poised near Trun Thuat Hamlet (VR 850 038), waiting to attack VNN boats on the Song Ong Doc.

The only serious incident involving TRAN HUNG DAO X river assets (RPD 62 and RID 43) during January occurred on the 14th when an Armored Troop Carrier of RID 43 was ambushed five kilometers west of the Song Ong Doc ATSB (VR 925 008). Two Vietnamese and one American advisor were wounded when the boat was hit with B-40 rocket

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and small arms fire from the south bank. Seawolves of Detachment Three, OV-10s from Binh Thuy, and the accompanying river boats saturated the suspected enemy position with over 78,000 rounds of assorted ammunition, but were unable to report inflicting any casualties.

On 23 January the USS WINDHAM COUNTY (LST-1170) relieved the USS GARRETT COUNTY (AGP 786) as the TRAN HUNG DAO X and Seawolf Detachment Six support ship. This job was in turn assumed by the USS HUNTERDON COUNTY (AGP 821) on 30 January.

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TRAN HUNG DAO XIV

Action in the TRAN HUNG DAO XIV AO during the month of January was again light, extending the lull that has persisted the last few months. Operations still continued with Seal Team One, Detachment Golf, Xray Platoon as it pursued an intense interdictory effort in keeping the enemy off balance and on the move. This campaign coupled with the relentless patrols by 217.1 units and the 7th ARVN Division's effort to penetrate, occupy, and pacify Kien Hoa Province, this long time VC stronghold, finally paid dividends. The Seals were involved in seven operations of a varying nature, and RPD 56 in their constant patrols were instrumental in thwarting the enemy's penetration of waterways in Kien Hoa Province on 10 and 12 January, producing nine probable enemy casualties.

On 10 January at 1645H crewmen of two PBRs of RPD 56 detected one sampan with three passengers crossing the Ham Luong River (XS 594 140), 12 kilometers southeast of Ben Tre in Kien Hoa Province. As the command boat approached the sampan, all three passengers dove overboard, and PBR personnel dropped concussion grenades in the area, probably killing the three VC. The sampan and three radios were captured in the one-sided engagement.

On 12 January in the same area at 1000H, PBR crewmembers

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of RPD 56 detected one junk with six personnel crossing from the north bank to the south bank on the Ham Luong River in the vicinity of XS 586 140. As the PBRs approached, the junk took flight and was taken under fire. The six occupants tried to flee but were presumed killed by allied fire. One junk and one kilogram of documents were captured.

Seal Team One, Detachment Golf, Xray Platoon, acting on intelligence reports, searched an area which was believed to be a VC rear services area at XS 922 151, 45 kilometers southeast of Ben Tre in Binh Dai District, Kien Hoa Province on 14 January at 1500H. The Seals discovered a solidly built and well camouflaged 13 structure complex which was promptly destroyed along with other captured enemy supplies. Black Ponies were then called in place strikes in the area, destroying bunkers and hootches. At 1750H, Seals continued the search of the area and discovered two smaller complexes which they destroyed. Four individual weapons, 25 kilos of documents, five kilos of medical supplies, two claymores, and 13 grenades were seized. A total of six hootches, four sampans, 2000 kilos of food stuffs, and various sundry supplies were destroyed. One VC was wounded and captured, and three VC were killed. There were no friendly casualties incurred during this mission.

On 15 January at 0930H, three Seals, three US EOD, and three VN

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EOD embarked aboard a Boston Whaler and an LSSC and departed from Ben Tre for XS 637 314 at the mouth of the Rach Ba Tru, the position of many bunkers which were sighted by the Seals in previous operations. After calling in Black Pony aircraft for initial strikes, the EOD personnel departed the LSSC and proceeded to blow up the remaining bunker complexes. In the process of the operation, one member of the VN EOD team tripped a booby trap, receiving bad wounds to the right foot and lower right leg. The wounded VN EOD member was medevaced at 1150H to Ben Tre.

On 29 January at 2030H, Seals conducted a search and destroy mission in Truc Giang District, seven kilometers north of Ben Tre City (XS 518 375), in Kien Hoa Province. The Seals were inserted by MSSC and patrolled the area searching hootches as they went along. At 0100H, the coxswain of the MSSC heard a sampan and fired a warning shot which prompted the occupants of the craft to evade. The coxswain took them under fire and killed three of them while destroying their sampan. A five man Seal element was left at the hootch site while a ten man unit patrolled to the west. At 0110H, the ten man element encountered a group of VC which initiated a firefight, resulting in one Seal being killed and two wounded. Black Ponies were called in for support, and the other Seal unit rejoined the group for added assistance. At 0150H, the Vietnamese interpreter was wounded as the allies extracted under heavy enemy

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fire. After the Seals completed extractions, the Black Ponies raked the entire area. The results of the encounter were one American killed and two Americans and one Vietnamese wounded. Enemy casualties were three VC killed.

On 25 January, ~~TRAN HUNG DAO XIV~~ was terminated and ~~TRAN HUNG DAO XIX~~ was initiated. ~~TRAN HUNG DAO XIX~~ AO will include the old AO plus other selected areas of Kien Hoa Province.

As of the first month of the new year, the organization, units and advisor personnel were as follows:

CTU 217.2.1	RAG 23/31	LTJG R. E. Brown
CTU 217.2.3	RPD 56	LT J. D. Gilbert
CTU 217.2.4	LSIL	
CTU 217.2.4.1	CG 34/35	LT B. R. Moffett
CTU 217.2.5	HAL-3	LTJG F. E. Arnold
CTU 217.2.6	RID 42	LT C. Votava

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TRAN HUNG DAO XVII

The TRAN HUNG DAO XVII AO, encompassing the heretofore unpenetrated U Minh Forest, continued to be one of the most active naval AOs in the Republic of Vietnam. During the month of January, the level of enemy activity was particularly intense on the waterways where Communist mining tactics achieved a marked degree of success.

Six allied boats were either sunk or received severe incapacitating damage as a result of floating or command detonated mines: (HQ 1258, HQ 1259, HQ 5152, HQ 1256, HQ 6002, and an LCM-6). The mining threat which continued unabated throughout the month was continuously expounded upon by intelligence units. General Nghi (CG 21st ARVN) informed Deputy COMNAVFORV at mid-month that the VC were increasing training of sapper units in the U Minh Forest and were expected to launch another mining campaign against VNN craft, and he specifically mentioned the formation of another 140-man sapper company to mount a more successful mining campaign. This information was later confirmed by a document captured by the 21st ARVN which detailed the enemy military objectives in the Rach Gia area during the first six months of 1971. An objective which the document particularly stressed was the destruction of GVN

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amphibious communications routes and the craft which use those routes, especially during January and February. Boats from RAIDs 70 and 71 were specific targets cited in the document.

For the Senior Advisor of TF 210, CAPT W. J. Crowe, the month started on an inauspicious note and probably gave him ominous premonitions when on 1 January at 1100H, Sealords 03 helo with CTF 210 and CAPT Crowe embarked while enroute from Ca Mau to the 4th Ranger CP (WR 040 480) spun out of control when a stabilizer bar snapped. Fortunately, the helo auto-rotated safely to the ground and landed in a rice paddy. The two commanders and the crew left the helo unscathed and were rescued by a VNAF helo in the area at WR 14 23, An Xuyen Province. Seawolves and ground troops from the nearby CP provided security for the downed aircraft.

On 7 January at 1900H, the Tango boat HQ 1258 on convoy operations to the 33rd Regiment CP units came under B-40 rocket and AK-47 fire from both banks at VR 944 667, struck a mine and sank. The boat was transiting a canal in the U Minh Forest loaded with 105 cases of ammunition when the attack occurred. Two USN advisors, LT William Charles Vasey, Senior Advisor to RAID 70, and BM2 Robert Lee Paynter, along with ten VNN sailors, were killed.

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The craft was mined with a 500 pound bomb that hit the centerline of the coxswain flat. HQ 1258 was lifted completely out of the water and flipped stern over bow. The aft section of the craft was inverted in 12 feet of water with the well deck section jack-knifed bottom to bottom and resting on the skegs of the aft section. The flight deck was blown 30 yards down stream, and the entire boat was declared unsalvageable. LT Vasey and BM2 Paynter were both recommended for the Bronze Star award.

On 11 January at 0510H, an LCM-6 of RAG 25/29 was sunk by a command detonated mine while transiting from the 31st Regiment CP to Thoi Binh at WR 075 390. Three VNN were wounded in the sinking. Seawolves placed strikes in the area, and ground troops were inserted for a sweep. One VC was killed in the encounter.

On 13 January at 1915H, Alfa Boat HQ 5152 was struck by a mine near the 33rd Regiment CP at VR 945 620. A second mine was disabled by gunfire by the personnel embarked. Damage to the boat was not extensive, and it remained operational. No personnel were injured in the incident.

On 16 January at 1155H, HQ 1259 was struck by a mine on the starboard side at VR 952 589. The explosion caused all the stanchions to separate from the deck of the flat-top, but no personnel injuries were incurred. It is believed that this incident was caused by a command detonated mine.

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On 17 January at 0935H, RAID 70 units, while sweeping for mines in Kien Giang Province on Can Gao Canal (VR 980 760), cut a wire connected to a mine. The mine surfaced, was taken under fire, and then sank without exploding. The ensuing search for the submerged mine was unsuccessful. Another mine was also detonated on 17 January while RAID 74 units in convoy with RAID 75 were transporting supplies from Ca Mau to the 32nd Regimental CP. The mine was detonated approximately five meters from the convoy causing no damage or casualties.

On 26 January at 1250H, Tango boat HQ 1256 of RAID 71 was sunk by a command detonated mine as it was proceeding north in a six boat convoy on the Can Gao Canal from the 33rd Regiment CP to rendezvous with a convoy heading south from the Kien An base. HQ 1256 was the last boat in the convoy when it was sunk. One Vietnamese was killed, four were wounded, and one was reported missing.

On 31 January at 1010H, HQ 6002, one of five RAG boats of RAG 25/29, and one LCM-8, while transiting the Song Trem Trem from the 31st Regiment CP to Thoi Binh, were sunk at WR 05 46 by a mine of unknown origin. U.S. Army Slicks immediately flew in salvage divers from Kien An and provided security along with 31st Regiment CP troops while salvage operations commenced.

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At 1500H, salvage operations ceased due to low visibility and continued the following morning. In sweeping the area on both banks of the canal, the ground troops discovered a 100 kilogram mine and captured one VC. When the ground sweep was finished and the sector granted clearance, the convoy again set forth to Thoi Binh, but was immediately halted when an intelligence report indicated a VC battalion had been sighted in the area. Black Pony strikes were placed on the targets with unknown results, and by the end of the day, the convoy was again on its way.

As the level of mining activity reached serious proportions, and as the paucity of salvage personnel and equipment precluded the effective salvage of damaged boats, the senior advisor to CTF 210 requested that a permanent salvage and diver unit be established and attached to the TRAN HUNG DAO XVII Operation. COMNAVFORV acceded to the request and dispatched a salvage team consisting of the AOIC HCT3, two Vietnamese divers, and one advisor for assignment to CTF 210. In addition, two LCM-8s were scheduled to be deployed for salvage purposes about 25 January. The problem of boat salvaging in the TRAN HUNG DAO XVII AO was again brought forth on 20 January to COMNAVFORV's attention since the salvage of boats previously discussed in prior communications still existed.

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To compound the problem further, annual leave was granted to the VNN divers for the observance of the TET holidays, and there was an indication that they would not be available until 1 February.

Another problem that confronted the AO commander was the growing number of screw fouling incidents that frequently hampered operations on the rivers. Principal materials that caused screw fouling were fishnets from fish traps in the canals, barbed wire, metal strands from 105 mm and 155 mm projectile boxes thrown into the river by ARVN personnel, minesweeping gear that became entwined in the prop or shaft, and debris in the canals which was usually found under the surface of the water.

Besides the many minings that occurred throughout the month, the RAG and RAID units, along with Sealord helicopters, in supporting the TRAN HUNG DAO XVII operation also interdicted enemy supply and communications lines by their constant patrols over the many waterways in the AO.

On 9 January at 0905H, RAG 25/29 units, while underway for a troop insertion, received two B-40 rockets in Kien Giang Province on the Song Trem Trem Canal (WR 018 10). One boat was damaged, but fortunately no personnel casualties resulted from the attack. At 1230H on the same day, Sealord 04 took small arms fire from the west

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bank of the canal at VR 940 655. One USN crew member was wounded and medevaced to Rach Gia. The helicopter returned under its own power to Binh Thuy.

On 19 January at 2115H, personnel of PBRs 7711 and 7713 from RPD 61, while in a WBGp, observed an outpost at WR 160 809 in Kien Giang Province under mortar attack from the north and south. The crew responded with illumination and gunfire support and observed friendly artillery impacting to the east of the outpost. No friendly casualties occurred, and the enemy casualties were unknown.

On 20 January at 1415H, boats of RAG 25/29 and the 3rd Battalion of the 31st Regiment, 21st ARVN Division, received B-40 and automatic weapons fire from both banks at WR 15 59. At 1445H, Seawolves placed a strike on the west bank while the units were extracted to the 31st Regiment CP. Ten ARVN soldiers were killed; nine ARVN soldiers and two VNN sailors were wounded. Enemy casualties were unknown.

On 27 January at 1335H, PBRs 7701, 7704, 7716, and 7717 from RPD 61 had just pulled up near an outpost at WR 153 872 in Kien Giang Province when the VC began to attack the outpost with automatic weapons fire. The crew members of the PBRs got underway,

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ascertained that the southeast of the outpost was under attack, and proceeded to lay down a barrage of fire for the next 30 minutes. As a result, the attack was contained and the VC driven away. No friendly or enemy casualties were reported from the operation.

As of the first of the year, the units and advisors attached to the TRAN HUNG DAO XVII AO were as follows:

<u>Designator</u>	<u>Advisor</u>	<u>Unit</u>
SA CTF 210	CAPT Crowe	ATF 210
SA CTG 210.1	LT Southworth	RAID 70
	LT Armentrout	RAID 71
	LT Ryland	RAID 74
	LT Harrison	RAID 75
SA CTG 210.2	LT Kinfley	RID 40
SA CTG 210.3	LT Gilleskie/Oversier	RAG 25/29
SA CTG 210.4	LT Zemansky	RPD 61

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TRAN HUNG DAO XVIII

TRAN HUNG DAO XVIII was initiated on 12 January 1971 as a combined operation to coordinate security forces for merchant shipping on the Mekong River in Cambodia. The Commander of the operation is RADM Herbert S. Matthews, USN, DEPCOMNAVFORV, whose headquarters are located at Tan Chau. Various VNN units provide escort for the merchant ships carrying supplies to Phnom Penh; the identity of the specific units is beyond the scope of this summary due to classification.

The new TRAN HUNG DAO operation was devised in response to an increasing number of effective enemy attacks on merchant shipping between the Cambodia-RVN border and Phnom Penh. The impending scarcity of POL stocks in Cambodia's capital city at the beginning of January, a scarcity caused in large part by the enemy interdiction of overland routes to Phnom Penh, made the successful completion of POL runs on the Mekong an urgent matter. On 6 January, for instance, an unprotected Shell Oil Company tanker was hit by three 75mm recoilless rifle rounds three miles north of the Cambodian border and, along with a Altex barge tied alongside, burst into flames. Six of the crewmen were killed. This was just one of eight attacks which have taken place against civilian tankers on the Mekong between the border and Phnom Penh since 26 November 1970.

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Accordingly, the first TRAN HUNG DAO XVIII convoy, consisting of three merchants and two tugs towing two POL barges each surrounded by a phalanx of various VNN boats, departed Tan Chau en route to Phnom Penh at 0600H on 17 January. At 0945H three RAID 73 boats were hit by 75mm recoilless rifle and B-41 rocket fire at WT 255 290. One Vietnamese sailor was killed and ten of them wounded, nine seriously. At 1400H the same day they were attacked by an enemy force of unknown size ten miles north of the Neak Luong. The ARVN troops embarked on the escort boats were inserted, and Seventh Air Force gunships called in. No damage was done to the cargo ships, and the convoy arrived safely in Phnom Penh at 2100H. At 0200H, 18 January, two of the merchants and one tug departed Phnom Penh for Tan Chau. They were attacked at 0310H with three 75mm rounds and small arms fire 14 miles southeast of Phnom Penh, with only minor damage caused to one merchant ship. The convoy pulled into Tan Chau at 0915H. The second convoy departed Tan Chau at 0315H on 19 January and arrived in Phnom Penh at 1900H the same day. At 1500H the convoy received B-40 and 75mm rounds at WT 210 650, but there were no hits. The escort boats departed Phnom Penh at 0530H, 20 January, were joined at the Neak Luong Ferry by three ARVN LCUs and a Cambodian freighter, and arrived in Tan Chau at 1613H.

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The first persistent enemy onslaught was directed at the third of the five convoys which transited during January. Consisting of six merchants, four tugs, 14 fuel barges, and three ARVN LCM-8s escorted by 30 small combatants carrying two companies of Cambodian troops, the mini-armada departed Tan Chau at 0700H on 23 January and did not encounter the enemy until 1715H, when it was attacked unsuccessfully by B-40 rockets 11 miles north of Neak Luong. They were attacked a second time 11 miles southeast of Phnom Penh, again at 1945H, and a fourth time at 1950H. The enemy scored a hit only during the third attack, causing minor damage to one of the merchants. The convoy arrived in Phnom Penh at 2110H without further mishap. The return trip commenced at 0630H on 25 January when one merchant, ten LCM-8s, two LCUs, and one tug with two barges, escorted by 32 small craft, left Phnom Penh. They received B-40 rounds and automatic weapons fire at 0900H, ten miles down river from the capital but arrived unscathed in Tan Chau at 1745H.

The fourth convoy of the month consisted of only a VNN AGP and ten PBRs which left Neak Luong for Tan Chau at 1500H, 26 January. At 1615H an apparently command-detonated mine exploded 30-60 feet from the AGP at WT 275 330 but caused no damage. They pulled into Tan Chau at 1837H.

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The fifth and final convoy of the month, composed of four tugs and four barges loaded with POL products, departed Tan Chau at 1040H on 29 January. At 1915H they received recoilless rifle fire 10 miles north of Neak Luong but were not hit. At 2150H they received mortar fire 11 miles southeast of Phnom Penh, and at 2310H they received mortar and recoilless rifle fire six miles southeast of the city. On this third occasion, one of the tugs went aground but easily disengaged itself and proceeded. Arrival in Phnom Penh was at 0100H on 30 January. The return trip began at 1915H, 30 January, and included three tugs, two merchants, and escorts. In the most serious attack of the month's operations, the convoy received mortar, recoilless rifle, and 50 calibre automatic fire nine miles out of port (WT 052 751) at 2020H. Two of the merchants were hit by 50 calibre and 75 mm fire, which wounded one civilian and started a fire in the hold of one of the merchants. One tug also was hit by an RPG-7 round, which caused negligible damage. The fire in the merchant was extinguished by 2330H, and the convoy continued on its way, arriving in Tan Chau at 0800H on 31 January.

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RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE

Enemy activity during the first month of 1971 was light in the Rung Sat Special Zone. There were a total of ten enemy casualties (KIA) and eight friendly (two KIA, five WIA, one drowning). Operating units of the RSSZ fighting force had little contact with the enemy and continued making reconnaissance missions, placing H&I fire on suspected enemy positions, making troop insertions which caused the enemy to evade when spotted, and destroying bunkers and caches of weapons and supplies. Army intelligence analysts considered the Chuong Duong operations 53, 54, and 57 of last December to be responsible for the heavy losses suffered by the enemy in the RSSZ but warned that replacements from VC/ NVA units deployed to Cambodia had been returned to operate in the RSSZ.

TG 116.9 units conducted routine patrols during the month and assisted in the combined Chuong Duong ground operations to be discussed later. MIDs 91 and 93 conducted daily chain drag sweeps of the Long Tau River and discovered sections of conducting wire in the river on two occasions. The crews of RPDs 51, 52, and 57 and those of RAG 27 checked ID cards averaging from 50 to 100 per day while conducting regular day and night patrols.

The helo crews of TU 116.7.2 conducted ten night reconnaissance

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missions in the Rung Sat during the month, placing A/S strikes on suspected enemy positions. On the night of 3 January, one USN UH-1B and two USA UH-1 helos sighted approximately one squad of VC (vicinity XS 965 655) in and under a tree in a swamp and placed A/S fire. A troop sweep by RF Company 117 the following morning discovered two bodies, 1 AK-47, several AK-47 magazines, and many documents. The two dead were identified as members of the An Thoi Dong guerrilla force. Four other VC were believed dead but their bodies had probably floated away at high tide during the night.

On 21 January at 2000H, the RSSZ USN LHFT acting on intelligence which indicated VC presence in the area, placed H&I fire in the vicinity of XS 95 65. At 2045H, the fire team received light automatic weapons fire from five to seven positions in the same area. The LHFT suppressed the fire, and later that night a night reconnaissance mission placed a strike on the area. Results of this, as well as of the ten other H&I air strikes during the month, were unknown.

RSSZ PRUs made four troop insertions on 8, 12, 14, and 31 January in the Can Giouc District and in one contact, accounted for the capture of one kilo of field gear, the destruction of 200 kilos of rice and 12 bunkers, and the death of one VC. The RSSZ PF Night Ambush Team had contact with an unknown number of VC on 1 January in the vicinity of XS 947 737. The USN LHFT which was scrambled to place a strike

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on the suspected enemy position, caused one secondary explosion. On 9 January troops from three RF companies were inserted by Slick in the vicinity of YS 087 587 in Can Gio District. The combined sweep resulted in the discovery of a 500-pound bomb (YS 006 586), three bunkers, and 11 sleeping platforms. The RSSZ EOD team was inserted to destroy the bomb, and the LHFT destroyed the bunkers. On 30 January the Quang Xuyen Intelligence Squad and RSSZ PF Platoon 4 inserted by Slicks into the vicinity of YS 155 754 and located a weapons cache consisting of 12 AKC rifles, 3 Chicom 11mm S.M.G. Type 36 (Grease guns), and 1 Soviet 7.62 L.M.G. Model DPM.

During January there were five Chuong Duong Operations (01-71, 02-71, 03-71, 04-71, and 05-71) consisting of insertions by USMC/RSSZ RF companies with the support of helos and VNN PBRs, RPCs, and MSRs from RSSZ RPDs, RAG 27 and MIDs. These combined operations, utilizing VNN, USA, and USN assets, were successful in destroying enemy bunkers and supplies with few friendly casualties, but direct contact with the enemy was negligible.

Operation Chuong Duong 01-71 began on 2 January and ended two days later. On 2 January, after uneventful sweeps by RF Companies 999 and 908, the Night Ambush Team inserted and set up ambush posts in the vicinity of YS 056 785 and YS 047 785. At 0940H RSSZ RF Company

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121 was inserted by Slicks at YS 164 785 and swept southwest. At 1113H troops made contact with one squad of VC at YS 170 783. Two Regional Forces troops were wounded (one seriously) and medevaced to Nha Be. Four bunkers and 20 sleeping platforms were destroyed. After continued sweeping the RSSZ Psyops Team conducted an airborne taped loudspeaker broadcast in support of the operation. In another Chuong Duong 01-71 troop sweep on 4 January a USA helo crashed, and one Army crewmember was injured slightly.

Chuong Duong 02-71 resulted in negative contact but Chuong Duong 03-71 (13 and 14 January) resulted in one USA KIA (killed by ground fire while piloting a helo gunship), one USA WIA (his crewman), three VC KIA (body count), and 2 AK-47s, one RPG-7 launcher, two B-41 rounds, two sampan engines, and a small quantity of documents captured. Troops inserted in Can Gio District (vicinity YS 07 53 and YS 08 50) on 16 and 17 January did not make contact with enemy forces but discovered a cache of food and destroyed three bunkers. A USA LHFT, while covering for Operation Chuong Duong 05-71 on 19 January in Phuoc Tuy Province at YS 230 704, discovered and destroyed a VC base camp and one sampan.

Other incidents in the RSSZ during the month included the shooting of a VNN enlisted man in Nha Be (XS 93 80) by another VNN on the

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last day of the month. Liberty for US personnel at LSB Nha Be was immediately secured for the remainder of the evening, and the wounded man was medevaced to the 24th Evacuation Hospital in Long Binh. On 23 January YS 145 512, two RF troopers of RF Company 647 were wounded (one seriously) when they tripped a booby-trapped grenade during a sweep. A USN helo vectored to the area and medevaced the wounded to the Vung Tau Australian Field Hospital. On 30 January an LCM Minesweeper of MID 93 (HQ 1024) collided with an LSM 404 on the Soi Rap River (vicinity XS 935 695) and sank immediately; one VN crewmember was discovered missing and believed to be trapped inside the sunken LCM. No advisor was embarked, and salvage operations were underway at month's end.

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LONG TAU SHIPPING CHANNEL

Enemy activity on the Long Tau was evident this month only in the discovery of another 500 pound bomb in the RSSZ (one 500 pound bomb was discovered 25 December 1970 and was believed to be intended for use in the Long Tau) and in the recovery of two sections of conductor wire found by MID 91 boats in the river. The first of these, 24 feet long, was retrieved at XS 895 896 on the 8th of the month, and the second, ten feet long, at XS 895 896 on the 24th. HQs 1804 and 1805, grounded on the 31st of December, were refloated early in January.

Although there were no mining incidents reported on the Long Tau during the month of January 1971, COMNAVFORV warned that "while the 1970 total of 241 watermining incidents has only slightly exceeded the 1969 total of 234, more than a two-fold increase in the number of craft sunk occurred in 1970 (60 as opposed to 24 in 1969),"

During the month there were also a few reports of advisors not embarked in RPD patrol boats because the VNN crews were incomplete, sometimes without the patrol officer. One advisor, however, reported encouragingly that the VNN crewmembers seemed to be taking more pride in their boats than six months ago.

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CTF 211

The following was the disposition of the RAID units at the end
of the month:

<u>RAID</u>	<u>OPCON</u>	<u>Location</u>
70	CTG 210.1	Kien An
71	CTG 210.1	Kien An
72	CTU 218.1.3	Cambodia
73	CTU 218.1.3	Cambodia
74	CTF 210	Ca Mau
75	CTF 210	Ca Mau

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CTF 214

The following was the disposition of RID craft at the end of January:

<u>RID</u>	<u>OPCON</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
40	210.1	Kien An
41	116.1	Nam Can
42	217.2	Ben Tre
43	212.6	Song Ong Doc
44	116.1	Nam Can
45	217.1	Dong Tam
46	214.1	Tra Cu
47	214.1	Go Dau Ha
48	214.1	Ca Mau

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RIVER ASSAULT GROUPS

The following was the disposition of RAG units at the end of the month:

<u>RAG</u>	<u>OPCON</u>	<u>Location</u>
22	CTG 216.1	Phu Cuong
24	CTG 216.1	Phu Cuong
26	Commander, Fourth Riverine Area	Long Xuyen
27	CTF 228	Nha Be
28	Commander, Third Riverine Area	Long Binh
30	Commander, Third Riverine Area	Long Binh
32	Commander, First Coastal Zone	Hue
21/33	CTG 217.1	Dong Tam
23/31	CTG 217.2	Vinh Long
25/29	CTG 210.3	Ca Mau

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SPECIAL WARFARE

The following was the disposition of the Seal Detachments
operating in a combat capacity throughout the country at the end
of January:

<u>Detachment</u>	<u>OPCON</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Officer-in-Charge</u>
Team One, Golf Platoon, Det Xray	217.2	Ben Tre	LT Collins
Team One, Golf Platoon, Det Victor	213.3	Long Phu	LTJG Clapp LTJG Young
Team Two, Alfa Platoon, Det Nine	116.2	Ca Mau	LT Moran
Team Two, Alfa Platoon, Det Eight	217.1	Dong Tam	LT Davis LT Strong
Team One, Golf Platoon, Det Yankee	116.12	Bac Lieu	LTJG Horst LTJG Campbell
Team Two, Alfa Platoon, Det Ten	116.12	Vi Thanh	LTJG Ganoung LTJG Kirkwood
Team One, Golf Platoon, Det Whiskey	116.1	Nam Can (SOLID ANCHOR)	LTJG Couch LTJG Sandoz
Team One, Golf Platoon, Det Zulu	116.1	Nam Can (SOLID ANCHOR)	LT Telfer LTJG Richards

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Team One, 116.5 Rach Soi
Golf Platoon,
Det Romeo

LTJG Boyhan
LTJG Dundas

Seal units are reviewed in the operation in which they operate.

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COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCES

United States Navy MARKET TIME forces inspected 1049 craft during January and detained none; Vietnamese Navy patrol inspected 6823 and detained three persons.

The following ships operated in MARKET TIME areas during the month of January:

USS CONSTANT (MSO 427)

USS FIRM (MSO 444)

USS LOYALTY (MSO 457)

USS ENERGY (MSO 436)

USCGC MORGENTHAU (WHEC 722)

USCGC RUSH (WHEC 723)

USS WINDHAM COUNTY (LST 1170)

THAI PGM-12

USS TACOMA (PG 92)

USS CROCKETT (PG 88)

USS WELCH (PG 93)

USS ANTELOPE (PG 86)

In addition to their regular MARKET TIME patrol duties, RUSH and MORGENTHAU carried out six NGFS missions, two by the latter, and four by the former, with a total GDA of 18 structures, four bunkers, and five sampans destroyed, and five persons estimated killed.

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Both ships operated off the U Minh Forest, MORGENTHAU near the mouth of the Song Ong Doc, and RUSH about 40 nautical miles due north of MORGENTHAU's position.

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FIRST COASTAL ZONE

January was generally a successful month for the forces of CTG 213.1 and associated Coastal Groups. Numerous mines were discovered, only one of which did any major damage. At 1115H, 7 January, an LCM-8 from MID 92 struck an unknown type mine on the Cua Viet River between Dong Ha and Cua Viet (YD 251 623). The ramp was blown off, a jeep on board was lost, and three VNN Sailors were wounded. The salvage team from NSF/LSB DaNang arrived on the scene on 8 January and immediately pushed the sunken craft to the south bank of the river in order to clear the channel. The jeep was recovered on 10 January and sent to Cua Viet. The NILO at Quang Tri remarked that this was the first incident since 9 May 1970 of mine activity that far west on the Dong Ha River.

Other mining and attempted mining incidents for the month were as follows: on 18 January at 1745H, a unit of MID 92 sweeping downriver on the Cua Viet discovered an NVA pressure mine at YD 305 677. EOD personnel recovered the mine and about 30 pounds of C-4 in a basket. The NILO, Quang Tri, commented that the mine was probably the work of the 126th NVA Sapper Regiment and conjectured on the basis of previous intelligence that other mines were placed in the area. His apprehensions were borne out as the month progressed. On 22 January at 0930H, a MID 92 skimmer detonated a water mine of unknown type

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on a scare charge run two kilometers east of Dong Ha (YD 253 623), with no casualties. At 1100H, 20 January, a yabuta junk from Coastal Group 11 detonated a water mine three kilometers northeast of Dong Ha (YD 248 623), though no casualties were taken. At 1415H the same day, a MID 92 skimmer detonated another mine three and one half kilometers northeast of Dong Ha (YD 260 623), again with scare charges. At 1500H, 23 January, a 60-pound NVA pressure mine was discovered by a local fisherman at YD 264 634 and reported to a Coastal Group 11 unit, and an EOD team successfully disarmed the mine. At 0810H, 24 January, an LCM-6 from MID 92 detonated a watermine while transiting the Cua Viet River two kilometers northeast of Dong Ha (YD 261 623); no casualties were incurred. Another scare charge run by a MID 92 skimmer at 1240H, 25 January, exploded a mine at YD 254 622. At 1320H, 26 January, another mine was detonated from unknown causes after a YFU passed the vicinity YD 268 632. Finally, a scare charge run by a MID 92 skimmer disclosed the ninth water mine of the month at 0920H, 27 January, at YD 257 622.

Junks of Coastal Group 14 attached to Operation CHI LANG I, sighted six basket boats and a sampan 18 miles southeast of DaNang at 0725H, 13 January. One of the basket boats and the sampan attempted to evade and were taken under fire. The remaining boats and occupants were captured. The end results of the engagement were three VC killed,

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five wounded, and nine captured , with no friendly casualties. Subsequent interrogations revealed that of the nine detainees, three were guerrillas of Xuyen Phuoc and Binh Duong Villages, and six were hamlet-level VCI. They claimed to be collecting rice and fish from other fishermen in the area when they were apprehended.

On 16 January at 1910H, sailors of four PBRs from RPD 60 en-route to their WBGp position observed three sampans one kilometer south of Hoi An. They took the boats under fire, sinking all three. All of the estimated nine occupants jumped into the water, and inflicted casualties remained unknown.

Coastal Group 16 personnel in a night defense position 24 miles south of Chu Lai encountered a company-sized VC unit as it spied the junks and opened fire. The reaction force from Base 45 was called in and three VC were killed in the ensuing exchange, and an AK-47 and four hand grenades were captured. The allies reported taking no casualties.

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SECOND COASTAL ZONE

There was almost no combat activity in the Second Coastal Zone during January, but whether this lull was a matter of choice or necessity for the enemy was, as usual, a matter of speculation. The Second Coastal Zone Intelligence Officer did report that in Khanh Hoa Province three VC mentioned to an informant that part of the "area revolutionary forces" were ordered to Cambodia and that local units were to increase their food production and try to avoid engagement. On the other hand, another source reported that an enemy regiment of 1600 men had moved into Khanh Hoa, one battalion of which would operate in the Cam Ranh area and two of which would operate against Dien Kanh District and Nha Trang; the Second Coastal Zone IO was skeptical of the quantity indicated in this latter report.

At any rate, the majority of the unfortunates detained by Second Coastal Zone patrol boats and junks for the month were suspected draft-dodgers, deserters, and off-limits fishermen. On the last day of January at 2325H, the VC, loath to let a month go by without at least a symbolic gesture, managed to drop six 82mm rounds outside the USN main gate at CG 23 headquarters before the night turned to February. One Popular Forces trooper was wounded.

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THIRD COASTAL ZONE

The friendly forces of the Third Coastal Zone experienced a moderate degree of activity during January. Units operating in the vicinity of Kien Hoa Province received more than their share of resistance, as the well-entrenched VC in the area had yet to be rooted out by the influx of allied forces engaged in the TRAN HUNG DAO XIV Operation.

High winds and heavy seas made January an especially strenuous period for the offshore assets. Vietnamese Navy LSM 743, loaded with fuel, lost power 28 miles southwest of Con Son Island on 10 January at about 0430H. The USS CONSTANT (MSO-427), assigned at the time to patrol zone 7B, was directed by CTU 213.3 to locate the disabled ship, which was discovered anchored about 12 nautical miles southwest of Con Son (XQ 51 28) at 1100H. At 1550H CONSTANT took the LSM under tow. An east-northeasterly wind of 20 knots or more blew in over the tops of ten foot swells, and the towing hawser parted within ten minutes. Towing operations were suspended until the next morning. CONSTANT floated provisions to the LSM crew, which had not eaten in two days, and at 0915H, towing was resumed. The two ships pulled into Con Son Harbor at 1630H.

In a second incident of distress on the high sea, a radio station on the coast received a call from a Vietnamese merchant TRAN LONG,

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at about 1100H, 12 January, stating she was sinking 11 miles east of Vung Tau (YS 49 43). The call was quickly relayed to CTG 213.3, and two PCFs and a WPB were dispatched to the scene, followed later by PGM 12. There was no sign of the merchant at the reported site, and a joint search involving the four MARKET TIME ships and a rescue helo was immediately begun. The units patrolled until 1545H, then returned to station. They found only debris and an oil slick, indicators that the ship had already sunk. No personnel were sighted.

Three junks from Coastal Group 34 were transporting RF troops for Thanh Phu District on the Bang Cung Canal about ten miles up from the mouth of the Ham Luong River (XS 653 043) on the morning of 15 January when they received two B-40 rockets, which destroyed one junk and wounded two VNN sailors and four RF soldiers. The junks took the starboard bank under heavy fire and inserted the ground forces, but no contact with the assailants was made. NILO Ben Tre commented that the area of the assault is one of the last real enemy strongholds in Kien Hoa Province and has been the scene of many previous ambushes, emphasizing that the entire Bang Cung Canal in Thanh Phu District should not be transited without strong defensive measures. His advice proved well-founded as on 17 January at 1800H another Coastal Group 34 junk carrying RF troops was hit in the same vicinity (XS 656 040), and two VNN and five RF troops were wounded.

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Seal Team One, Detachment Golf, Victor Platoon, carried out a number of successful operations during the month, staging out of the Coastal Group 36 base at Long Phu. At 0300H on 9 January, two Seals, with LTJG Clapp in charge, six LDNN, three advisors, and one guide left Long Phu and inserted by LSSC at XR 249 863. After waiting silently for five hours they sighted a band of armed VC moving into the area. The VC initiated fire, which the Seals suppressed. Three VC were killed, two of whom were suspected VCI, and two mausers and a damaged rocket launcher were captured, along with assorted ordnance and a kilo of documents.

On 12 January at 0030H, five members of Victor Platoon, four LDNN, two advisors, and a guide proceeded by MSSC and skimmer to a Vietnamese outpost at XR 300 686. The outpost chief reported two 30-man VC units and two ten-man units near the Seal's prospective target, so the mission was aborted.

Six Seals, an interpreter, and a guide attempted to capture a village finance cadre member at 0230H, 18 January. They were forced to abandon the mission when their guide refused to lead the operation due to arrangements to pick up four VC Chieu Hois later in the morning.

Operating on Hoi Chanh intelligence, seven Seals, an interpreter,

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and three guides inserted at XR 442 603 at 0200H, 21 January and patrolled 300 meters to the southeast where they encountered four VC and took them under fire, killing one and wounding two. The dead VC was identified as a member of a district commo-liaison cadre.

Nine members of Victor Platoon attempted to capture the district security chief at 0300H, 22 January. After insertion at WR 982 944, unfortunately, their guide could not get oriented, and they were forced to abort.

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FOURTH COASTAL ZONE

Activity was characteristically light in the Fourth Coastal Zone during January. The major action of the month was carried out by Coastal Group 44 forces in a daring sweep near Ha Tien .

PCF 3817 in patrol area 9L (US 87 23) received some small arms fire at 1845H, 16 January, from the east coast of Phu Quoc Island (US 89 23). The Swift returned fire causing unknown enemy casualties. One VNN sailor was slightly wounded.

CDR M.J. Shine relieved LCDR G.W. MacKay as Fourth Coastal Zone Advisor/Senior Advisor CTG 213.4 on 15 January.

At 1445H, 8 January, junks from Coastal Group 44 detected and detained a sampan with two VC aboard eight miles northeast of Ha Tien (VS 525 574), then sighted a small group of VC evading to the northeast. The reaction team pursued and was ambushed with small arms fire. One VNN crewman was killed in the encounter, and two VC were captured. Two days later the reaction team was reinserted at the same spot in search of a large rice cache purportedly in the area. The sweep was successful, and 11 tons of rice were unearthed.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS AND CIVIC ACTION SUMMARY

During the month in the Rung Sat Special Zone the Psyops and Medical Teams conducted six loudspeaker broadcasts from Slick helicopters urging "Chieu Hoi" and seven MED/DENTCAPS at seven villages in Can Gio and Quang Xuyen Districts, treating a total of 401 medical and 115 dental patients and distributing 201 oral hygiene leaflets. Four people were medevaced to Nha Be for further treatment.

In the latter part of December there had been an outbreak of malaria in Can Gio District. In Long Thanh Village (YS 097 483) on 5 January, the RSSZ VNN medical staff and advisors treated 56 people for malaria, and after the MEDCAP, the Psyops team conducted a two-hour live broadcast on malaria and its treatment.

At SOLID ANCHOR Psyops operations during January seemed to be less fraught with troubles than in previous months. The VNN Polwar Team translated a tape script targeted at the VC in the AO, and the Thi Tran Village Chief recorded it; they also gave out clothing and assisted one of the detainees in making a tape urging his friends to depart the Dam Doi area (vicinity WQ 210 610 - WQ 235 925) and stating that he was well cared for. The team collected 70 rocket boxes and several packing crates for use

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in the Ham Rong and Thi Tran schools and continued to warn villagers of the 3000 meter restricted zone around SOLID ANCHOR. Another psyops tape was made by a woman brought in by the SEALs on 22 January; the tape was an appeal to her friends to come out of VC-controlled areas and resettle in GVN hamlets and a statement of her good treatment while at SOLID ANCHOR.

At the end of December, 1970, there was an outbreak of cholera during which the VNN assisted in evacuating 13 people from the village to SOLID ANCHOR for treatment and further routing. A province medical team arrived 31 December to administer inoculations and sanitation instruction, and a second team arrived on 4 January. As of 1 January the situation stabilized at four dead, 13 evacuated, and 31 still sick. The quick reaction to the cholera outbreak by the VNN and GVN was quickly exploited by the Polwar team in a printed handout to the villagers.

A GVN mobile training team spent a few days in Thi Tran training the PSDF there; 30 weapons were issued by the team. The US MAT 67 reported that during the night of 2 January, 20-25 VC armed with SKS and AK-47 weapons entered Ham Rong and took nine M1 and M2 rifles from the PSDF. MAT 67 also conducted a night ambush on 9 January with the Ham Rong PFs with negative results. On 19 January

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a VNN hospital ship arrived and for a day participated in the children's party in Ham Rong and distributed cloth and health care items to the Biet Hai and their dependents. In summary for the month of January, 1971, SOLID ANCHOR Psyops reported: 155 patients treated, 10 broadcast hours, 210 detainees, and 200,000 leaflets dropped at eight positions in the area.

Elsewhere in the Republic of Vietnam, Seabee construction teams 0517 and 7104 reconstructed playground equipment in Kien Hoa and Ba Xuyen Provinces and Team 0517 assisted in a city clean-up campaign in Kien Hoa Province. Team 13307 donated clothing to refugees in Vinh Binh Province. During January Seabee teams deployed throughout RVN working on village schools, roads, public buildings, and power distribution systems as part of the USAID program.

During one week (19-25 January) BJU-1 Psyops personnel reported dropping 390,000 Leaflets and gaining nine Hoi Chanh. One of these Hoi Chanh was an NVA company commander who returned with leaflets distributed by BJU-1. In Moc Hoa during the same period, 550,000 leaflets were dropped, 22 hours of broadcasts were made, and there were two MEDCAPs and three Hoi Chanh reported. CTF 213 units on MARKET TIME Inner Barrier patrol distributed anti-terrorist leaflets and health kits on 18 and 21 January, and LSB Cam Ranh Bay

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and CG 26 VNNs held a MEDCAP and passed out "Operation Handclasp" items such as soap, blankets, and medical kits on 22 January at CP 061 025.

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ACCELERATED TURNOVER PROGRAM AND TRAINING SUMMARY

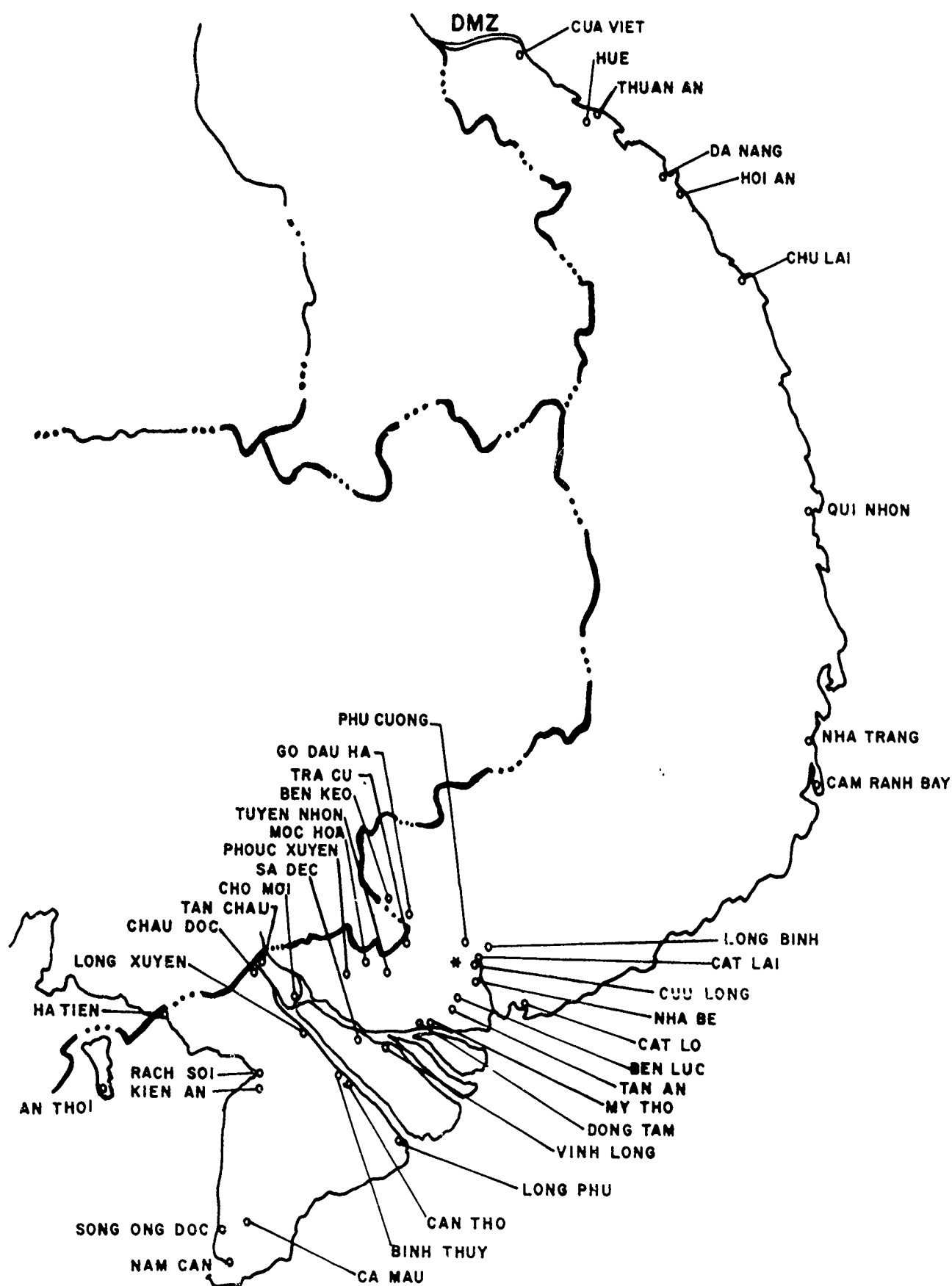
As all the small combatant craft had been turned over to the VNN by the end of 1970, the USN assets transferred in January were mostly assorted supply craft, with two major exceptions. Two 311' high endurance Coast Guard cutters, USCGC YAKUTAT (WHEC 380) and USCGC BERING STRAIT (WHEC 382), became the TRAN NHAT DUAT (HQ-3) and the TRAN QUANG KHAI (HQ-2) respectively on 1 January 1971 in a ceremony at the Vietnamese Navy Headquarters in Saigon. CDR Vu Xuan An, VNN, relieved CDR Paul D. Henneberry of BERING STRAIT, and CDR Nguyen Tam relieved CDR Walter Bartlett of YAKUTAT. The ships will be the largest and most formidable of the Vietnamese Navy, with 5" guns and top speeds of over 15 knots. Training for the take-over began about a year ago when 15 VNN enlisted men reported aboard each vessel; the twin cutters now carry full crews of 106 men, including officers. They will both be assigned to stations in the MARKET TIME Outer Barrier after further training.

Few other craft were turned over during the month. Four LCM-8s were given to the Logistic Support Command at Ben Luc on 5 January. On 31 January LCU 1484 and three more LCM-8s were transferred to the LSC at NAVSUPFAC, DaNang. Finally, two LCM-6s were turned over to the LSC at Nha Be.

ACTOVLOG phase-ins continued on schedule with 700 personnel remaining in training.

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NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY SAIGON

Highlights for the month for NSAS and detachments included the commissioning of OP Base Long Binh on 8 January, the transfer of eight PBRs fitted out by LSB Binh Thuy to MNK (Cambodia) on 27 January, the evacuation of seven Nationalist Chinese survivors who had been rescued by the USS CAMDEN (AOE 2) and had arrived at the 95th Evacuation Hospital in DaNang on 15 January-- four remained there for treatment of injuries--and the checking of an outbreak of falciparum malaria in the Rung Sat Special Zone by the medical team from LSB Nha Be during the first week of the new year.

Two NSA detachments fought fires in their areas this month. On 4 January, the NSF DaNang Fire Department assisted in extinguishing a fire in a nearby village that was started by a terrorist molotov cocktail thrown into the midst of a Buddhist rally. On 17 January, Qui Nhon ISB personnel rushed to a fire in a village in the area and after four hours had put it out. The village chief reported two children had died in the fire which destroyed about 300 homes. LSB Qui Nhon provided hot meals for nearly 500 persons and provided medical care for minor injuries suffered during the blaze.

Hostile fire incidents were very light during the month at NSA detachments. On 3 January, it was determined at LSB Dong Tam that the explosions of the night before had not been incoming rounds but the

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detonation of three anti-personnel mines at XS 425 439 within the Dong Tam base perimeter minefield. The cause of the triggering was unknown. A sentry at PBR Mobile Base 2 sighted a swimmer equipped with a mask 80 feet off the barge on 22 January; the VNN EOD team from Ben Luc checked the hull with negative results.

At NSAD/LSB Dong Tam, 49 Vietnamese trainees graduated in January, and two more areas of responsibility were transferred to the VNN: the Ordnance Repair Shop and the Electronics Repair Shop. Later in the month, all NSA ETs were transferred, leaving the Electronics Shop strictly in the hands of the Vietnamese and their U.S. advisors. On 15 January, a 150-ton capacity synchrolift platform crane was accepted from the contractor, RMK-BRJ, at Dong Tam by RADM McManus and N.K. Luan, Acting Commander, VNNLOGSUPPCOM. On 30 January, CDR Richard E. Johe relieved LCDR H.M. Effron as Officer in Charge, NSAD Dong Tam.

The current major project of NSAS in January was the installation of communications systems at An Thoi, Dong Tam, Vinh Long, Long Xuyen, Cat Lai, Long Phu, Cho Moi, Ca Mau, and Nha Trang. At OP Base Vinh Long, the design of nets for use in defending the afloat base against enemy mines was begun.

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The USS GARRETT COUNTY (AGP 786) left late in the month for Subic Bay for liberty and water after having been off the coast of Vietnam steadily for the past five months. The warship is due to put into Guam and return to RVN about 23 April. The USS SATYR (ARL 23) remained on the Mekong River in Vietnam to support RAIDS of CATF 211 operating north of the Cambodian border. The USS MARK (AKL 12) spent the month resupplying Delta bases, making runs to Vung Tau, Binh Thuy, Tan Chau, and Dong Tam; then the MARK joined the USS WINDHAM COUNTY (LST 1170) at Song Ong Doc to support cargo movements. The USS PARK COUNTY (LST 1077) also made Delta resupply runs to Vung Tau, Nam Can, Chau Doc, and Binh Thuy.

During the month YRBM 20 was sent to Tan Chau to serve as convoy operational command post. YR 71 and associated ammis were towed to Tan Chau on 13-14 January from Binh Thuy to augment the base for Cambodian border patrols. The VNN Ship HQ 9610, formerly YRBM-17, after receiving repair and communications equipment from YRBM 20 and assistance in installation from LSB Dong Tam personnel, departed Dong Tam to assume repair duties in the Mekong Delta.

Distinguished visitors to NSAS and detachments included RADM D.W. Cooper, USN, COMCARDIV NINE, who travelled to Dong Tam, Binh Thuy, Rach Gia, Kien An, Tra Cu, and Nha Be, 8-9 January, and

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RADM K.R. Wheeler, Commander Naval Supply Systems Command, and RADM P.F. Cosgrove, Commander Service Force, Pacific, who visited NSAS assets in the Saigon area on 14-16 January. On 31 January, the Honorable John W. Warner, Under Secretary of the Navy, arrived at NSF DaNang for a visit. He was accompanied by Dr. Robert A. Frosch, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research and Development.

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THIRTY-SECOND NAVAL CONSTRUCTION REGIMENT

During January 1971, the first month of the Year of the Pig, enemy harrassment and inadequate transportation to remote sites plagued NMCB units In Vietnam as two new projects were started at Ca Mau and Cua Viet.

Significant hostile action reports during the month included the mortaring of NMCB 74 Detail ECHO at Dong Tam twice and Detail GOLF at Nam Can (SOLID ANCHOR) four times during the month. On 25 January at 2105H the SOLID ANCHOR complex received 10 to 12 rounds of 82mm mortar causing damage to three buildings, a dump truck, and one TD-20. One Seabee received minor injuries. Sniper incidents were reported at Nam Can by an equipment operator at work on the runway, at Long Phu by Detail HOTEL personnel, at My Tho (Team 7407), and between Binh Thuy and Cho Moi as two Detail CHARLIE personnel drew 15 rounds while traveling by boat. On 22 January, two rounds of 122mm rocket fire struck the Bien Hoa AFB complex (also HQ for NMCBs 74 and 133). In these incidents, the only Seabee casualty was one member of Team 7407 who suffered a bullet wound and severe laceration to his left arm and was medevaced to Okinawa (name not reported).

In a serious non-hostile accident Constructionman John H. Zajdel,

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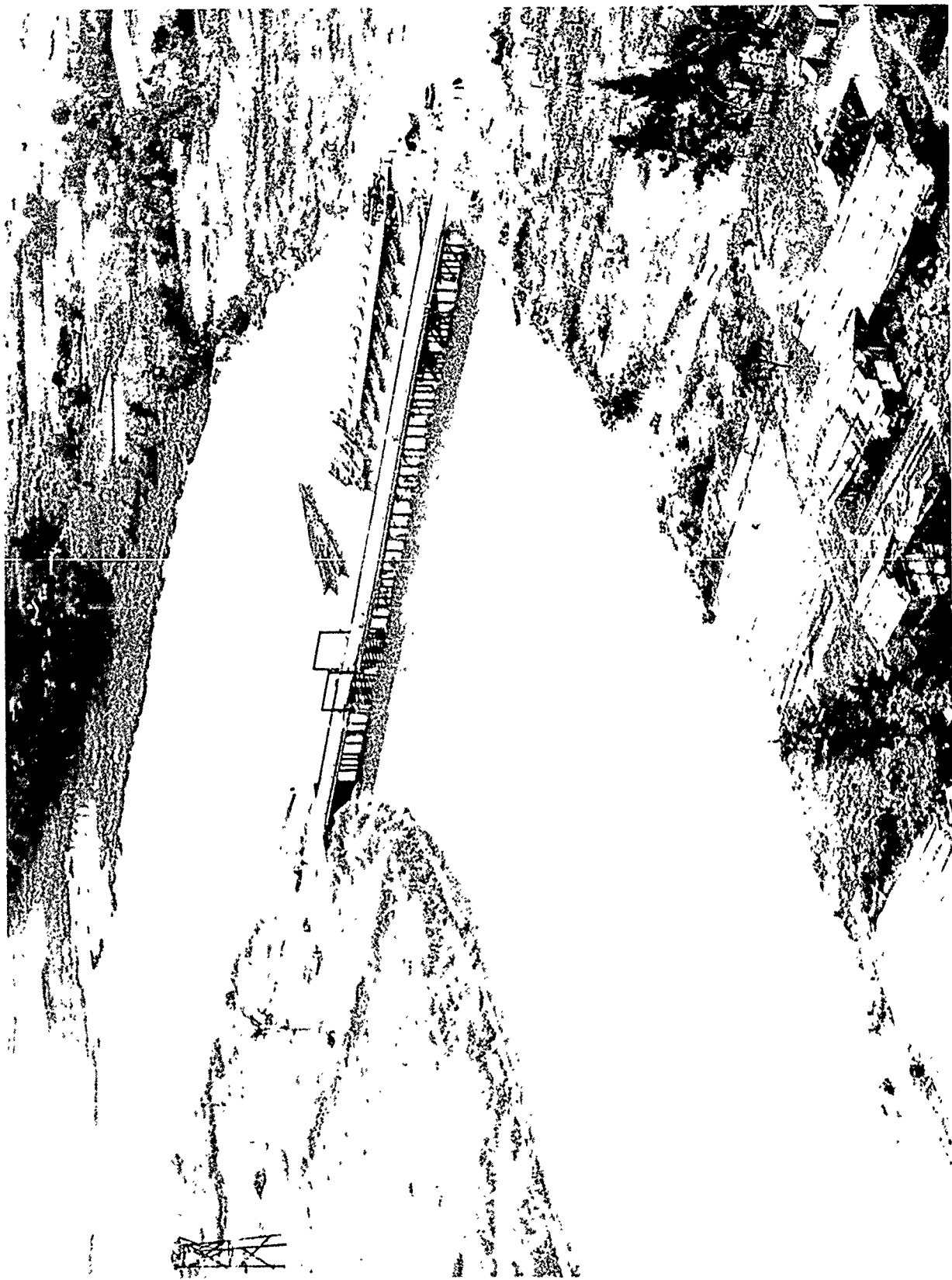
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USNR, lost his footing in the soft sand around a ditch he was measuring and fell into the jaws of a ditching machine. The crew had been ditching footing for an elevated water tower. Zajdel was medevaced to the Army Third Surgical Hospital in Binh Thuy with major lacerations.

Sixty Seabees of NMCB 3 were detailed to Ca Mau to begin work on an ACTOV base there around 14 January. Most construction equipment and some base defense material arrived on 18 January by Mike 8 boats from Bien Hoa, the remainder later in the month by Army truck convoy. The 5000 tons of material required for the project will continue to pose a problem for adequate transportation through the rivers and canals of the Delta. NMCB 3 also detailed a Seabee convoy to Cua Viet on 24 January to work on a road which will allow transportation of materials from DaNang for the construction of a major pier and sapper fence.

On 6 January the Tuyen Nhon Advanced Tactical Support Base and the project for canal bank erosion control there were completed and turned over to the VNN. Detail AQUARIUS at Chau Doc and Tan Chau were to continue work on the "punchlist" items at the ACTOV bases there which have already been turned over to the VNN. Construction of dependent shelters at Chau Doc and Thu Duc continued with a total of 132 units completed during January. Work on London Bridge and the upgrading of QL-1 neared completion, and Cooper Bridge was

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Aerial view of Cooper bridge opened to traffic (Highway ML-12E).

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completed this month. One feed mill and one farrow barn at NSF Cam Ranh Bay were inspected and approved by the COMNAVSUPPACT: Saigon representative on 21 January.

During January two Seabee teams (0414 and 13305) departed the Republic of Vietnam without relief leaving 11 teams and 19 details (totalling 1590 men at month's end) in-country, organized as follows:

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Projects</u>
<u>(CBPACDET)</u>		
Team 0107	Long An Province	3 room school; road upgrading
0414	Kien Phong Province	5 room school (deployed 21 Jan.)
7104	Ba Xuyen Province	village power distribution system road upgrading
7105	Go Cong Province	road upgrading
13305	Gia Dinh	4 public buildings, 2 room school; road upgrading (deployed 17 Jan.)
13306	Kien Giang Province	3 room school, generator shed
13307	Vinh Binh	3 room school
<u>NMCB 74</u>		
Team 7407	My Tho(Dinh Tuong Province)	
7409	Cao Lanh (Kien Phong Province)	
Detail Charlie	Cho Moi (WS 482 662)	POL Facility, boat ramp, administration, dispensary, and mess hall buildings (ACTOV facilities) for VNN.
Golf	Nam Can	Antenna system and hardstand; ACTOV facilities.
Hotel	Long Phu (XR 263 841)	POL facilities, boat maintenance warehouse; ACTOV facility.

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Yankee DaNang horizontal construction for 32 NCR
(OPCON NMCB 3); aircraft shelters
for FASU DaNang

Papa Binh Thuy
Echo Dong Tam
Foxtrot Kien An (WR repair battle damage to OP base
115 900)

NMCB 3

Team 0318 Ben Tre (XS
350 500)

0319 Xuan Loc (YT
050 450)

Detail Aquarius Chau Doc/ Tan ACTOV base and dependent
Chau (WS 246 housing
715/WS 237
942)

Borealis Ca Mau (WR
160 120) ACTOV base

Dorado Binh Thuy/ administration and logistics support
Bien Hoa for NMCB 3, MR IV

Fornax Ba To (BS installing airfield matting
565 339)

Hydra Cam Ranh Bay/ drilling wells
Nha Trang area
(CP 150 140)

Indus Monkey Mountain road development and antenna
(DaNang) site

Jupiter Chu Lai (BT QL-1; POL tanks
528 046)

Kochab Hawk Hill (BT repairing culverts of QL-1 South
239 321)

Libra London Bridge rebuilding (relieved Detail
(AT 913 588) Borealis)

Mercury LZ Baldy (BT repairing bridges on QL-1
132 453) south

Orion Hue (BT 747 providing technical assistance to
228) VN contractor

NMCB 133

Detail Kangaroo Thu Duc (X F dependent shelters
901 828)

NCBMU 302

(Naval Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit) has 16 mobile teams
(2-48 men) deployed throughout RVN to provide maintenance and repairs
to Navy facilities. These teams are also engaged in constructing depend-
ent shelters.

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RADM A.R. Marschall, OICC RVN/COMTHIRD NCB, visited Bien Hoa, Battalion 74 HQ to present awards, including the Meritorious Service Medal to CDR J.D. Kirkpatrick, CO, NMCB 74, on 10 January 1971. RADM Marschall also visited NMCB 3 at Camp Haskins in DaNang. Seabees were awarded one Purple Heart and three Good Conduct Medals during January.

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APPENDIX I

Glossary of Abbreviations

The following abbreviations and terms are commonly used in the combat zone by all agencies and are listed here in amplification of those used in the text:

ABF	Attack by fire
AMMI PONTOON	A multi-purpose barge, standard size 28'x90'
AO	Area of operations
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
ASPB	Assault Support Patrol Boat
ART	Artillery
ATC	Armored Troop Carrier
ATSB	Advance Tactical Support Base
A/W	Automatic Weapons
BLACK PONY	OV-10 Twin Engine Turboprop Counterinsurgency aircraft
CCB	Command and Communications Boat
CG	Coastal Group
CHICOM	Chinese Communist
CIDG	Civilian Irregular Defense Group - mercenaries of Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian descent who fight primarily around their own villages
CMD	Capital Military District

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CONUS	Continental United States
CRIP	Civilian Reconnaissance Intelligence Platoon
CZ	Coastal Zone
DUSTOFF	Medical evacuation by helo
ENIFF	Enemy- initiated fire fight
FOM	French Patrol Boat
FSB	Fire Support Base
FWMAF	Free World Military Assistance Forces
GDA	Gun Damage Assessment
GVN	Government of Vietnam
HAFT	Helicopter Attack Fire Team
H&I	Harassment and Interdiction Fire Support
JGS	Joint General Staff (Vietnamese)
KIT CARSON SCOUTS	Former Viet Cong who have come over to the side of the Saigon government and serve with allied military units
LAFT	Light Attack Fire Team
LAW	Light Anti-tank Weapon
LCPL	Landing Craft, Personnel, Large
LDNN	Vietnamese equivalent of USN Underwater Demolition Team
LHFT	Light Helo Fire Team
LOH	OH-6 Light Observation Helicopter
LRRP	Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol

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MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
MATSB	Mobile Advance Tactical Support Base
MEDCAP	Medical Civic Action Program
MONITOR	Heavily armored LCM-6 (40mm Cannon or 105mm Howitzer)
MR	Military Region
MRF	Mobile Riverine Force
MSB	Minesweeper, Boat
MSD	Minesweeper, Drone
MSF	Mobile Strike Force - mercenaries who deploy and go anywhere
NGF	Naval gun fire
NGFS	Naval gun fire support
NILO	Naval Intelligence Liaison Officer
NIOTC	Naval Inshore Operations Training Center
NOD	Night Observation Device
NVA	North Vietnamese Army
OJT	On the job training
PBR	Patrol Boat, River
PCF	Patrol Craft, Fast (Swift Boat)
PRU	Provincial Reconnaissance Unit
PSA	Province Sector Advisor
PSYOPS	Psychological Operations

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RAD	River Assault Division
RAG	River Assault Group (VNN)
RAID	River Assault and Interdiction Division (VNN)
RAP	Rocket Assisted Projectile
RAS	River Assault Squadron
RF/PF	Regional Forces/Popular Forces
RPD	River Patrol Division
RPG	Rocket Propelled Grenade or River Patrol Group
RSSZ	Rung Sat Special Zone
RVNAF	Republic of Vietnam Air Force (or Armed Forces)
SAR	Search And Rescue
SEAWOLF	UH-1B Helo, heavily armored, USN operated
SHADOW	C-119 aircraft
SKIMMER	20-foot fiberglass motorboat
SLICK	UH-1B Helo, USA operated
SPOOKY	C-47 aircraft
SSB	Swimmer Support Boat (Skimmer)
STAB	Strike Assault Boat
TAOR	Tactical Area of Responsibility
USARV	United States Army, Vietnam
VNMC	Vietnamese Marine Corps
VNN	Vietnamese Navy
ZIPPO	Flame thrower - equipped ATC or Monitor

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